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Release 2011 – 781 Newsy Stuff

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December 2 2011



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USA, CA, SAN PEDRO, NOVEMBER 19 2011. 2 MEN TRAPPED IN SAN PEDRO STORAGE TANK RESCUED

larry altman & kristin s. agostoni



Emergency vehicles gather on a hillside in San Pedro where two men were trapped after falling into a tank. Between Gaffey St and Western Avenue. Both were rescued.

Two men cleaning the inside of an underground fuel storage tank at a military facility in San Pedro were hospitalized Friday after one fell 30 feet to the bottom, firefighters said. The man suffered bruises and other injuries and was unable to climb from the tank himself. The other waited at his side for emergency workers to arrive and was not injured, firefighters said. Both were covered with sludge. The men were cleaning the inside of the 130-foot-wide, 30-foot deep underground tank at the Defense Fuel

Support Point San Pedro facility at 3171 N. Gaffey St. when the accident occurred about noon. The facility is operated by United Paradyne Corp. The men, both in their 20s, were contract workers. "It appears one of them lost his balance and fell," Los Angeles city fire Assistant Chief Ralph Terrazas said. The man suffered injuries preventing him from leaving the tank himself, Terrazas said. His co-worker could have climbed a ladder and gotten out through the 3-by-3-foot entry hatch, but remained at the bottom. Terrazas said neither man was trapped. About 75 firefighters responded, including an urban search-and-rescue team and a hazardous-materials unit. The rescuers provided the men with air and made sure the tank's fumes were safe so that the men and rescuers were not overcome. By 2 p.m. both men were brought out, cleaned up and taken to hospitals. One man went to County Harbor-UCLA Medical Center near Torrance and the other to Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Harbor City. The facility is a fuel terminal for the energy branch of the military's Defense Logistics Agency, supplying fuel to the western region of the country. Lt. Col. Tam Gaffney, the unit's commander, said the workers involved in the accident were among the many contractors employed on the site.

http://www.contracostatimes.com/california/ci_19366254

BRAZIL, RIO DE JANEIRO. NOVEMBER 20 2011. BRAZIL OFFICIALS CRITICIZE CHEVRON OVER OIL SPILL

simon romero



The response to the spill, which Chevron said it was notified of on Nov. 8, is an important test for the authorities as Brazil moves to tap oil from its large recent offshore discoveries.

Chevron came under intense scrutiny in Brazil Friday over an oil spill at an offshore field the company operates, with federal investigators here threatening fines for Chevron and potential prison terms for its officials if they are found guilty of violating environmental contamination laws. The response to the spill, which Chevron said it was notified of on Nov. 8 and which left an oil sheen near Brazil's southeast coast, is an important test for the authorities as Brazil moves to tap oil

from its large recent offshore discoveries. If Brazil meets its ambitious production goals, it may emerge by the 2020s as the world's fourth-largest oil producer after Russia, Saudi Arabia and the United States. While the spill, from an appraisal well in the Campos Basin, is thought to be much smaller than BP's oil spill last year in the Gulf of Mexico and is said by Chevron to have almost dissipated, it also presents an additional challenge for Chevron in Latin America. In nearby Ecuador, Chevron has faced seething resentment and a protracted legal battle over oil contamination in the country's rain forest. Fábio Scliar, the head of the environment affairs division of the federal police, flew this week over the area of the spill, where Chevron has said it has 18 vessels controlling and is monitoring the sheen. In an interview on Friday, Mr. Scliar expressed annoyance over Chevron's handling of the spill and its methods of cooperating with Brazilian investigators. "They've been very resistant about providing information, and they were hesitant about allowing me to land on the platform," Mr. Scliar said. "We had to be rather energetic with them about our requests." Mr. Scliar said Chevron employees could face prison terms of several years if they were found to have violated environmental laws. He said he would request testimony next week from several Chevron employees. Responding to Mr. Scliar's assertions, Kurt Glaubitz, a spokesman for Chevron, said Friday in a statement: "We are working with all appropriate agencies to resolve the issue. We have provided all available resources to manage the situation." Mr. Glaubitz said that Chevron had "accommodated all requests for information in a timely manner," and that the "situation is largely resolved." He said that Chevron was told by Petrobras, the national oil company and Chevron's partner in the affected area, the Frade field, of the spill on Nov. 8, and that Chevron found oil seeping from the ocean floor the next day.



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Several Brazilian government entities monitoring the spill, including the National Petroleum Agency, said Friday in a statement that Chevron had achieved a "substantial reduction" of the oil seepage in recent days. Mr. Glaubitz said that the volume of the sheen on Friday was estimated at about 18 barrels. Earlier in the week, Chevron estimated that the spill involved 400 to 650 barrels of oil from its Frade field, in waters about 3,800 deep. (The BP oil spill involved nearly five million barrels.) Mr. Glaubitz said Chevron was planning to conduct an internal investigation, and would cooperate fully with the authorities. Marina Silva, a former environment minister and presidential candidate, said in a telephone interview that the spill served as a warning as Brazil moved ahead with exceedingly complex projects to produce oil from its "pre-salt" discoveries, beneath waters almost 10,000 feet deep and thick layers of salt, sand and rock. "This event is a three-dimensional alert to the problems that may occur," Ms. Silva said. "This certainly does not smell good." Despite Chevron's assertions that the problem was contained, it faced mounting criticism from various other quarters in Brazil. Legislators said they would summon Chevron officials to appear for questioning. And here in Rio, where Brazil's energy industry is largely based around Petrobras, activists from Greenpeace emptied black ink on Friday in front of Chevron's headquarters to protest the spill. Carlos Minc, the top environmental official for the state of Rio de Janeiro, said the spill was "much bigger" than Chevron's estimates. Speaking on the Globo television network, Mr. Minc said that the authorities would "demand compensation" for any damage done to fishing or wildlife. Several Brazilian news media reports referred to information from SkyTruth, an environmental group in the United States that uses satellite images to track oil spills and other accidents. John Amos, the group's president, said he estimated that the spill was perhaps 10 times larger than Chevron's estimates, meaning it extended over about 918 square miles.

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/19/business/energy-environment/brazil-officials-criticize-chevron-over-oil-spill.html?_r=1

GIBRALTER, NOVEMBER 20 2011. CORROSION CAUSED FATAL FUEL TANKS EXPLOSION AT GIBRALTR PORT



The roofs of both tanks were scattered with corrosion perforations which allowed flammable vapour to escape. An independent report commissioned by the Gibraltar government into the fuel tanks explosion at the port at the end of May gives the direct cause as corrosion perforations in the roofs of the two tanks. A Spanish worker died from the serious burns he suffered in the explosion. The report by Capita Symonds reveals more than 20 perforations in Tank No. 1 and more than 40 in Tank No. 2, 'all of which had been caused by long term corrosion, wastage of the steel.' The Gibraltar government said in a press release on Thursday that these holes allowed flammable vapour to escape from the tank and into the atmosphere. The escaping vapour ignited when the welder struck an arc while welding a pipe to the guardrail of the roof of Tank No. 1, and this then caused the vapour in the roof void to also ignite. The flash then spread to Tank No. 2 via pipe work on the top of each tank. The report also notes that the perforations had been identified but had not been repaired. The report's main conclusion is that, before the explosions, the integrity of both tanks would have been breached by the many corrosion perforations in their roofs and that neither would have been hermetically tight. The sullage plant facility at Gibraltar port is operated by Nature Port Reception Facilities, and it's understood that their licence is to remain suspended until the government considers its decision on the matter. The operation of the plant in its present location will also be subject to a detailed review.

http://www.typicallyspanish.com/news/publish/article_32727.shtml

USA, N.Y, NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 20 2011. FEUDING PARTNERS TRADE IN GAS AND LAWSUITS

john golden

A Thornwood-based company's \$43-million acquisition last year of nearly 90 Shell Oil Co. gas stations in Westchester and metropolitan New York has sparked a bitter battle for control of the \$50-million enterprise between a long-time service station owner and operator in the region and two major investors. The opponents and their attorneys since June have pumped hundreds of pages of legal filings into state Supreme Court that contain charges and countercharges, claims and denials involving the theft of more than \$1 million in gas-pump revenue, alleged death threats and false criminal complaints, illegal firings and hirings, gross mismanagement, a "scorched-earth" attempt by its day-to-day operator to ruin and devalue the company, dealer price and rent manipulations, "predatory pricing" that undercut and angered some Shell dealers and libel and slander. At the center of the entangled business conflict – which includes a related legal battle for control of a fuel distributorship and eight Shell stations in Fairfield County, Conn. – is Sammy Eljamal, owner of Wholesale Fuels in



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Thornwood. In addition to the bitterly divisive Shell venture, which also has offices in the Wholesale Fuels building at 25 St. Charles St., Eljamal has interests in several other service stations in the region. In his libel and slander suit against a business partner, Eljamal said he acquired his first Mobil gas station franchise at the age of 18 and his "extraordinary growth" within the Mobil franchise system earned him the nickname "Mobil Man Sam." Eljamal in 2009 joined Leon Silverman, chairman of Silverman Realty Group Inc. in White Plains and a prominent commercial landlord in the county, Scarsdale investor James A. Weil and three passive investors to form the limited liability companies NY Fuel Holdings and Metro NY Dealer Stations and subsidiaries to acquire, lease and distribute fuel to 88 Shell-branded stations in Westchester, New York City and Long Island. The oil company's gas-station subsidiary, Motiva Enterprises L.L.C., agreed to sell its New York-market properties and assets for approximately \$43.3 million, according to court papers. Eljamal put up an approximately \$2-million stake in the deal and the investors led by Silverman and Weil put up some \$21 million. The deal was completed in June 2010 with a \$33-million loan from Manufacturers and Traders Trust Co. Eljamal was the only personal guarantor to sign the loan and purchase agreements. He, Silverman and Weil agreed to co-manage the business, with Weil as the venture's financial chief and the industry-experienced Eljamal running day-to-day operations. Soon after the closing, however, Eljamal's partners say they grew disillusioned with his performance and ability. Weil in his affidavit said Eljamal had "little to no experience" operating the wholesale distribution or a business "of this size and magnitude." His lack of financial acumen also led the partners into unprofitable station acquisitions and costly renovations, Weil said. They were irked by his "habit of disappearing for days on end" and unavailability on business matters. Weil, who invested \$7 million of his own and family funds in the venture, said Eljamal's failure to sign operators for several acquired stations has caused "substantial and continuing losses" for the company. Weil said "the last straw" for him and Silverman was Eljamal's alleged theft of some \$1.4 million from the company from gas-pump sales. He and his father, Musa Eljamal, separately operate Fuelco stations supplied by the partners' company, NY Fuel Distributors. As commission agents, they are required to deposit all cash sales proceeds into the distributor's bank account and in return receive a monthly per-gallon commission. Weil said Eljamal withheld the deposits. Though he made partial restitution, Weil claimed Eljamal still owed the company about \$1.2 million. The partners contacted the Westchester County district attorney's office. Less than one year after their purchase closed, his partners notified Eljamal they were offering to sell all of the Shell properties for \$25 million to a buyer who also would assume all company debt. Eljamal was told he would be removed as a company manager in June. Eljamal, though, through attorney Albert J. Pirro Jr. has obtained a temporary court order barring his removal and keeping him in control of day-to-day decisions at the company. Weil, though, must first sign off on any decisions regarding financial matters. Pirro argued that removing Eljamal as manager would place the company in default of its loan agreement and leave Eljamal personally liable for the balance of the loan, which attorneys for Silverman and Weil said amounts to about \$24.3 million. The clashing business partners in June were issued a gag order by Supreme Court Justice William Giacomo. In late August, Eljamal returned to state Supreme Court with another attorney, Joshua J. Grauer of Cuddy & Feder L.L.P. in White Plains, seeking hundreds of millions of dollars in damages from Weil for libel and slander. His business partner's "campaign of lies" has driven away Eljamal's fuel-supply customers and contractors and employees and has damaged his ability to obtain financing for his business, he claimed. Silverman and Marc S. Oxman, co-counsel in White Plains for Eljamal's legal opponents, declined to comment when contacted by the Business Journal. Eljamal's assistant at his Thornwood office said he was "out of state this week." He did not return the call for comment.

- "On or about May 8, 2011, Sammy (Eljamal) told Brent (Brent Coscia, NY Fuel Holdings general manager) over dinner that all he needed to do was put \$15,000 in a brown paper bag, and he could have Leon or me killed. While some of Sammy's friends and relatives tried to explain away this statement to Brent later that same day, it was not a bell that could be unrung." – James A. Weil, in an Aug. 19 court affidavit
- "Plaintiff has seen first-hand noticeable changes in his business relationships, only to discover upon inquiry that the individual dealing with plaintiff in a dramatically changed manner had been told by defendant that plaintiff was out of the business, always 'high' on drugs or, in sum and substance, was on his way to jail." – Complaint by Sammy Eljamal in his libel and slander suit against James Weil

<http://westfaironline.com/2011/17386-feuding-partners-trade-in-gas-and-lawsuits/>

INDIA, BIHAR, KISHANGANJ, NOVEMBER 20 2011. ONE LABOURER KILLED, THREE INJURED IN EXPLOSION

A labourer was killed and three others injured today in an explosion in an out-of-use petroleum tanker near Chanamana village in Bihar's Kishanganj district, RPF sources said. The explosion took place while the labourers were using gas cutters to cut



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into pieces a tanker as scraps from near the railway lines where a fleet of 19 petroleum tankers were lying in damaged conditions since September 28, they said. A labourer died on the spot, while three others sustained severe burn injuries, they said adding the injured were admitted to a hospital at Siliguri for treatment. Efforts were on to ascertain the identity of the deceased and the injured ones, the sources said. The rail traffic on Katihar-New Jalpaiguri section of the East Central Railway (ECR) was disrupted due to the explosion, they said adding senior railway officials have rushed to the spot to supervise restoration of traffic. A similar explosion had taken place at the same spot on November 18, but there was no casualty or injury to anyone, the sources said. The fleet of 19 tankers filled with petroleum products were damaged in a massive explosion after a goods train on which they were mounted had derailed near Chanamana village under Katihar division of the ECR on September 28. The railway authorities had since sold the damaged tankers as scraps to the contractors who had hired labourers to remove the same by using gas cutters. An investigation was underway into the cause of explosion in the damaged tanker.

<http://ibnlive.in.com/generalnewsfeed/news/one-labourer-killed-three-injured-in-explosion/907801.html>

INDIA, KASHMIR, JAMMU, DODA, NOVEMBER 20 2011. 17 HURT IN DODA ACCIDENT

faiz ali tramboo

In yet another mishap within two days, atleast 17 persons were wounded in a head on collision between a bus and a tanker near Kanderi Nallah at Assar area of Doda district. Eyewitnesses said that a bus (JKO2N-7734) on its way to Jammu from Doda collided with an oil tanker (JKO2R-5380) coming from the opposite direction near Kanderi Nallah leaving 17 persons injured. "The injured were shifted to the Primary Health Centre Assar for treatment by the locals with the help of police team soon after the mishap," they added. Out of 17 wounded passengers, two critically injured identified as Ghulam Nabi (58) son of Ameer Din of Behota Marmat and Sanjay Kumar (28) son of Nath Ram of Udyanpur were airlifted to Government Medical College Hospital Jammu for specialized treatment. Those admitted at district hospital Doda have been identified as Payar Nath (38) son of Chandi Nath of Assar, Ghulam Nabi (25) son of Ameer Din of Behota Marmat, Gori Lal (58) son of Ram Dass of Malhori, Mohammad Rafiq (28) son of Quadratullah Zargar of Bhagwah, Sushil Kumar (28) son of Gyan Chand of Udhampur (Oil Tanker driver), Sanjay Kumar (28) son of Nath Ram of Udyanpur, Yasir Ali (24) son of Mohammad Hanief Zargar of Kastigarh, Nargis Batool (34) wife of Rehmatullah Khan of Doda and her two daughters Tasbeeha Batool (9) and Haseeba Batool (8), Tanveer Iqbal (28) son of Mohammad Iqbal of Sazan Doda, Lalita Devi (45) wife of Amar Chand of Kashoor, Anju Devi (30) wife of Ashok Kumar of Ramgarh, Heena Riaz (13) daughter of Riaz Ahmed of Sazan Doda, Manohar Lal (30) son of Jagat Rama of Malwana, Shashi Dev (36) wife of Payar Nath of Ranka Assar and Javed Ahmed (25) son of Ali Mohammad of Korapani.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2011/Nov/20/17-hurt-in-doda-accident-46.asp>

NORWAY, OSLO, NOVEMBER 20 2011. OIL SPILLS CAUSE OXIDATIVE STRESS FOR UP TO 20 YEARS

Despite not being visible to the human eye, the effects of oil spills can affect fish DNA, and cause oxidative stress for years after, according to an international collaborative project. Major oil discharges such as the one from the drilling rig Deepwater Horizon or the grounding of the Full City off Langesund, Norway, have wrought havoc on the natural environment. The research project Toxprof examined the impacts of oil discharges along the coast of Europe. The researchers studied the effects of common Arabian light crude as well as oil from the Norwegian Ekofisk field, in addition to the diesel fuel commonly used by ships. The experiments were carried out at the University of Oslo's marine biological station at Drøbak, located on the Oslo Fjord. Seawater was pumped through coarse sand containing oil that was partially broken down by UV radiation. The oil then floated to aquariums containing cod, mussels or spotted goby. In this way the researchers could control the concentrations of the oils' environmentally hazardous components. "We tested how the broken down oils affected cod, mussels and spotted goby," says Ketil Hylland, Professor of Toxicology at the University of Oslo's Department of Biology. "From the experiments we were able to work out clear profiles for the impacts of the selected oils, yielding some important answers as to which substances are most toxic. "We measured a variety of biomarkers in the gills and liver of the cod and the digestive glands and gills of the mussels. The trials showed that the effects changed over time and lasted more than three weeks." Using different methods, the project participants observed effects that clearly demonstrated that the contaminants in oil can potentially lead to DNA damage and cause oxidative stress in the experimental organisms. The research clearly indicates that even though the oil disappears from the seawater surface and beaches after a spill, the toxic substances in oil can still cause adverse effects long afterwards. Researchers also found that the oil can become more toxic and harmful during



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the breakdown process. "Many sites may experience negative impacts for 15 to 20 years following a large-scale oil spill, as was the case with the Exxon Valdez in Alaska in 1989. Oil can entail major ecological consequences while breaking down, so the seriousness of oil spills must not be downplayed just because the damage is no longer visible to the naked eye," said Professor Hylland.

<http://www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/15952/oil-spills-cause-oxidative-stress-for-up-to-20-years>

USA, AKA, LISBURNE, NOVEMBER 20 2011. BP'S PROBATION SHOWDOWN >> PROSECUTORS: ALASKA SUBSIDIARY WAS NEGLIGENT IN LISBURNE SPILL, IS REPEAT OFFENDER

wesley loy

In advance of an upcoming hearing on whether BP violated its criminal probation in Alaska, federal prosecutors and company lawyers on Nov. 14 filed briefs outlining their positions on the matter. If the paperwork is any indication, the hearing promises to be feisty. Prosecutors say a November 2009 pipeline rupture near BP's Lisburne oil production center showed the company "has now proven itself to be a recidivist offender and repeated violator" of environmental laws and regulations. BP's attorney, Jeff Feldman of Anchorage, has a whole different take: "The Lisburne spill was an unfortunate incident, but it was not a crime."

The Charges

BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc. is charged with two violations of the probation imposed on the company following a major pipeline leak in the Prudhoe Bay oil field in 2006. BP pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor violation of the Clean Water Act in that case.

The first probation violation alleges BP violated Alaska law with a negligent discharge of a pollutant to state land and water. The second probation violation alleges BP violated the Clean Water Act, which prohibits a pollutant discharge to "waters of the United States." The Justice Department says BP easily could have prevented a rupture in a pipeline, 18 inches in diameter, that carried a mix of crude oil, natural gas and water from well sites to the Lisburne facility. The pipeline froze up and burst, and BP employees ignored warning alarms indicating a problem with the line, prosecutors say. More than 13,000 gallons of oil spilled from the ruptured line. "The 2009 spill vividly demonstrates that BP has not adequately addressed the management and environmental compliance problems that have plagued it for many years, and that continue to result in operational, process safety, and equipment failures," says the brief prosecutors filed Nov. 14. "These failures are not only reasonably foreseeable, but are also completely within BP's power to control. BP's choices have been reckless, and further violations of state and federal law are the result." An evidentiary hearing on the alleged probation violations is scheduled to begin in federal court in Anchorage on Nov. 29 and last four days. If convicted, BP could face more probation and fines.

BP's Defense

The pipeline that ruptured carried oil in concert with that is, it was "looped" with a larger, parallel 24-inch pipeline. The presence of this second line masked the freeze-up in the first, as the larger line continued to deliver all the oil operators expected at the Lisburne facility. BP's lawyers are attacking the charges on two fronts. First, they contend that BP and its employees did not act negligently, that the Lisburne rupture was an "unprecedented event" for a BP pipeline of that type on Alaska's North Slope and that employees were highly trained and responded appropriately to the conditions. BP operators discovered the no-flow condition of the pipeline on Nov. 14, 2009, but it ruptured 15 days later, before an assessment of how to deal with the problem was completed, BP says. Second, BP argues that the Lisburne spill isn't subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction because the wetland spill site is not directly adjacent to navigable waters, including nearby Prudhoe Bay. "We expect the government's 'negligence' case to be almost exclusively built on 20/20 hindsight," says BP's hearing brief filed Nov. 14. "We believe it will proceed backwards from the spill's occurrence and conclude that BPXA must have been negligent or even criminally negligent when it failed to anticipate or to discover sooner the first unplanned stoppage in the 18-inch pipeline's 25-year history. The evidence presented during the hearing will demonstrate that BPXA acted well within the applicable standard of care based on the circumstances and the information it knew or reasonably should have known at the time."

The Witnesses

Both sides expect to call multiple witnesses to the stand at the Nov. 29 hearing. BP says its witnesses will include lead operators, as well as highly experienced engineers who will "explain the cause of the rupture and why BPXA's actions fully comported with applicable standards, regulations, and standards of care." BP also intends to call John Studt, identified as a former national program manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at its Washington, D.C., headquarters, to "explain why the spill site is not a 'water of the United States' and therefore falls outside of Clean Water Act jurisdiction." The government says its witness list includes a former BP employee who was "the Compliance and Ethics Officer for BP in Alaska following the



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2006 oil spill, until 2010." The former employee wrote a letter to the government in April 2010 citing the management culture, budget constraints and other issues as possible factors in the Lisburne spill.

<http://www.petroleumnews.com/pntruncate/253366434.shtml>

ENGLAND, ESSEX, NOVEMBER 20 2011. CAMPAIGNER'S FEAR AFTER NEW GAS LEAK AT REFINERY

jon austin

A campaigner is calling for Essex County Council chiefs to tighten up safety checks on potentially explosive fuel storage sites. It comes as the Echo can reveal a further leak of flammable liquid petroleum gas at the Petroplus oil refinery, at Coryton. A Health and Safety Executive spokeswoman confirmed there was an escape of petroleum liquid on the site, on October 29. The watchdog would not say at this stage whether or not the gas leaked from a fuel storage tank, or how much gas was emitted. However, she said: "There were no injuries, but we are investigating the incident." The health and safety watchdog usually only investigates incidents involving death, injury or suspected breaches of legislation. Because there were no injuries, it is thought the investigation must have been launched into a breach of safety laws. The latest incident brings the number of leaks, explosions or tank overflows at the refinery since 2007 to 16 – with 11 in the past two years. Four of these incidents are now being probed by the executive, including the leak on October 29, and prosecutions could follow. George Whatley, from Canvey, who is chairman of People Against Methane pressure group, said: "This is a big concern. South Essex, in particular Canvey, has three of the five top-tier Control of Major Accident Hazards (Comah) sites in Essex. "The exclusion zones for all three – Coryton, Oikos, on Canvey, and Calor Gas, also on Canvey – overlap. "If there was an explosion at any of them it could be catastrophic." Top-tier Comah sites are designated for the toughest possible health and safety inspections, because they pose such a high potential risk to people living nearby. Mr Whatley believes there is too much self-regulation of local sites and Essex County Council is dragging its heels over introducing tougher annual external inspections. He thinks these should lead to the loss of the fuel storage plants' operating licences, if failings are found. His group gave evidence to the council's Safer and Stronger Communities Committee on the issue two years ago, but he claims it keeps postponing a decision. He has also asked Castle Point MP Rebecca Harris to arrange a meeting with ministers to discuss safety concerns. Essex County Council was asked for a comment, but failed to reply in time. Petroplus declined to comment.

http://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/9373600.Campaigner_s_fear_after_new_gas_leak_at_refinery/

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO, POINT FORTIN, NOVEMBER 20 2011. BUSINESSMAN QUIZZED AFTER DIESEL FIND

cecily asson



A truck is seen parked next to a tank which is believed to be used to store thousands of gallons of diesel outside the yard of a businessman's home in Point Fortin yesterday. Customs and EMA officials raided the man's home after being tipped off. Apart from the tank, they also found plastic containers (inset) stored under the house.

A businessman from Point Fortin was up to late yesterday assisting officers of the Customs and Excise Division in connection with the discovery of a large stash of diesel fuel near his home. It was revealed to Sunday Newsday last night that the businessman had stored approximately 10,000 gallons of diesel fuel inside a rusted steel tank and in plastic drums. The storage of the fuel has evoked fear among residents living close by and they told Sunday Newsday yesterday that

they fear a disaster is waiting to happen if fire ever breaks out in the area. Customs and Excise officers swooped down on the fishing village yesterday morning and conducted an audit of the diesel the businessman had stored up in the tanks. They then took him away for questioning. However, residents told Sunday Newsday that the fuel is sold from the compound to persons who visit the businessman's premises. Customs officers, some armed, arrived at the businessman's premises at about 8 am yesterday. They were followed by members of the Environmental Management Authority (EMA). Both sets of officers then conducted a search of the businessman's premises. When Sunday Newsday visited, there was a large fuel tank on the premises, where there is a house. The large tank, which is normally the type seen on fuel trucks, is believed to have contained the majority of the diesel. Under a house there were also several plastic containers which, neighbours said, were also filled with the fuel. Residents said that earlier this year, they filed a report with the police about the massive diesel storage. Police officers visited the premises, conducted a search but no one was arrested. Yesterday, one resident close by expressed fear



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that a fire could spell disaster for their homes if the activity of the businessman continues. Customs and EMA officers spent several hours interviewing the businessman on whether diesel is sold from the premises, before taking him away. They reportedly returned later with him and continued their investigations. The illegal bunkering of diesel shot into the limelight recently, when it was discovered that millions of dollars worth in diesel fuel was being sold on the black market, from a massive makeshift network at Sea Lots, Port-of-Spain. The fuel was reportedly being sold on the high seas. An investigation is currently underway by the Ministry of Energy.

<http://www.newsday.co.tt/news/0.150894.html>

USA, VA, WISE CO, NOVEMBER 20 2011. TANKER FIRE BLOCKS US 23

bill rambo

 [Slideshow http://www.wcyb.com/slideshow/news/29808676/detail.html](http://www.wcyb.com/slideshow/news/29808676/detail.html)



A big fire on a road in Southwest Virginia has deadly results. The fire blocked traffic for several hours. Virginia State Police told News 5 WCYB's Laura Halm the tanker was heading to Louisa Kentucky and carrying gasoline. The accident happened around four Friday afternoon. The truck crashed and caught on fire and Virginia State Police said the driver of the tanker died. "We don't know who it is. The body will be transported to Medical Examiners Office in Roanoke for confirmation of identity," said Sergeant Jack Baldrige with VSP. The tanker blocked both lanes of traffic on US 23 for some time. VSP had to reroute traffic at the Glade Morgan intersection on 23 and the Pound intersection on 23. Sergeant Baldrige said a tanker that size can carry an estimated 8,500 gallons of gasoline. The flames caused the biggest problems for firefighters. "The foam that we have on our truck

was unable to extinguish the flames. It was burning through the foam," said Assistant Chief Richard Reece with the Pound Volunteer Fire Department. Hazmat was called in to help, and firefighters said the flames didn't spread too far, just into the median. "What little did spread, we were able to extinguish with water and there was no damage," said Reece. And nearby homes were safe. VSP said no other cars were involved and investigators are trying to figure out what exactly caused the accident. "Apparently the driver went off the roadway to the left, struck the median, and then the tractor trailer came to rest and burst into flames," said Sergeant Baldrige. VSP said all four lanes of US 23 are now open. But clean up crews will be out during the night and police said traffic may go down to one lane on both sides.

<http://www.wcyb.com/news/29810719/detail.html>

USA, VA, CLARKE COUNTY, NOVEMBER 20 2011. OFFICIALS TELL RESIDENTS GASOLINE LEAK UNDER CONTROL

edward leonard



According to the MRIS listing, JJ Corner Store is being offered for sale at \$1.9M: JJ's Corner Store - Approx. 2.75 acres at the corner of Route 7 & Shepherd's Mill Rd. Three parcels, one zoned HC. This is the only commercial zoning in a twelve mile stretch of westbound Route 7 - VDOT measures over 22,000 average daily trips at this location. Existing businesses & two adjacent parcels w/rental homes.

The message was clear from representatives of Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality, the Lord Fairfax Health District and engineers from Winchester-based Triad Engineering Inc. who met with approximately 35 residents of the Shepherds Mill Road area last night. Although four area wells have been contaminated by a gasoline leak from JJ Corner fuel tanks, officials are cautiously optimistic that most of the fuel has been recovered from groundwater and there is no immediate threat to public health. Area residents, six government officials and

two pollution cleanup contractors met for nearly two-and-a-half-hours last night to hear about a 14-month gasoline leak saga that has impacted wells in the vicinity of JJ Corner Store near the intersection of VA Route 7 and Shepherds Mill Road. Initial signs of a problem occurred in October 2010 when store owner James "Doodle" Shepherd learned that one of the gasoline tanks at his station had failed a pressure tightness test. According to DEQ representatives, Shepherd immediately took steps



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to notify DEQ once the leak was suspected. "The property owner was very proactive in this case" said Mac Sterrett. R. McChesney "Mac" Sterrett, DEQ's Petroleum Program manager, said that the ultimate source of the gasoline leak – which may have discharged as much as three hundred gallons of fuel into the ground – was a pinky-finger sized corrosion hole in the bottom of the 20-year-old gasoline storage tank. Sterrett said that DEQ believes that the leak probably occurred for less than three months but added that there is no way to be sure of the exact quantity of gasoline spilled. "DEQ learned about the problem on October 12, 2010" Sterrett said. "On October 27 soil borings and monitoring wells were installed around the store. On November 4th our consultants, Triad Engineering, found gasoline in the groundwater." David Forrer, DEQ's Petroleum Remediation Team Leader who has managed the cleanup effort, said that nine water wells around the store have been tested. Four of the tested wells showed traces of petroleum products in the water. According to Forrer, the contaminated wells had levels well below the federal Environmental Protection Agency standard for safe drinking water. "One of the wells showed a contamination level of just 1.2 parts per billion (ppb)" Sterrett said. "That level is very low and is just at the lowest level that can be detected in the laboratory." John Giese, DEQ's Petroleum Programs Remediation manager, compared the 1.2 ppb statistic to a single ping pong ball in an Olympic-sized swimming pool filled with ping pong balls. But even though detected contamination levels have so far been well below the levels considered unsafe by EPA, Sterrett emphasized DEQ's "zero tolerance" policy for petroleum contamination has resulted in carbon filters being placed on each of the four wells to remove any gasoline hydrocarbons found in the well. Lord Fairfax Health District Director Dr. Charles Devine said that an independent epidemiologist with his agency had reviewed all the data that DEQ has gathered about the contaminated wells. Based on that review, Devine said that he would not expect to see any health issues from the water once it had been filtered echoing statements in a letter sent to area residents by Clarke County government on November 7 assuring that the contamination problem poses no immediate health risks. "You may have concerns as to whether it is safe to use your water, let your children play outside, work in your yard, and live in your home. The answer to all of these questions is, yes, it is safe" the letter stated. "The petroleum compounds in the groundwater pose no threat to you other than that which you might be exposed to from your well water, and DEQ will ensure that you are provided with a filtration system should your water prove to be contaminated by petroleum products." Both Forrer and Sterrett also addressed concerns expressed by several people at the meeting over the potential for the contaminated ground water to spread to other places. Forrer said that DEQ's monitoring wells had confirmed that groundwater in the area was moving in a northeasterly direction. He also said that test wells placed on the west side of Shepherds Mill road had not detected any contamination making it unlikely that the spill would threaten wells in the Blue Ridge Estates subdivision. Sterrett said that petroleum contamination seldom travels more than several hundred feet from the source further reducing the risk to additional area wells. "The longest plume that I've ever seen was 1,700 feet which was huge" Sterrett said "and I've been doing this 38 years." However, one factor that neither DEQ nor EPA has much experience with is that 10 percent of the gasoline in the J.J. Corner Store spill is ethanol. Sterrett explained that while gasoline floats on the surface of water, ethanol allows petroleum contaminants to bind with water molecules. The presence of the ethanol content allows the spill to be carried further from the source. Dr. Devine added that the ethanol associated with the JJ Corner Store spill is the same type of alcoholic contained in beverages like beer. At last night's meeting DEQ officials said that pumping operations from the monitoring wells and the tank site over the past year have been very successful in removing gasoline. But in an effort to remove even more of the hydrocarbon contamination, including the ethanol, DEQ's cleanup contractor, Triad Engineering, has installed two large white plastic treatment tanks that are now treating the contaminated groundwater before releasing clean water back into the environment. "The process that we are using now is treating about a half-gallon of water per minute" said Triad engineer Nick Wolf. DEQ said that it is impossible to calculate how much pollution remains underground but so far, 20,000 gallons of water have been processed through the treatment tanks. Citizen at last night's meeting also expressed concerns about the long term movement groundwater contaminated by the spill. Sterrett, however, said pollution plumes generally don't spread more than a few hundred feet from the source. Sterrett said that the farthest that he has seen a petroleum plume move in his 38 years of working on petroleum spills was 1,700 feet. "That was huge. It blew us away," he said. DEQ's Giese also affirmed that as the petroleum spills naturally spread and dilute, naturally occurring microorganisms in the soil begin to literally "eat" the hydrocarbons. But even with twelve monitoring wells beyond the store property having tested "clean", DEQ is planning to install nine additional wells to the north and east of the site just to be safe. Although some of the attendees at last night's meeting also questioned J.J. Corner Store owner Doodle Shepherd's responsibility in the spill, DEQ was steadfast in its position that Shepherd was not at fault. "Mr. Shepherd was really proactive and did all of the right things" said Sterrett. "He did everything properly according to our regulations." Mr. Shepherd was not present at last night's meeting. When questioned about the cost of the cleanup DEQ's director of Spill Response and Cleanup Elizabeth Lamp said that so far



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Shepherd's out-of-pocket cost for the cleanup, not including costs associated with removal and replacement of the defective tanks, was about \$5,600. The remainder of the cleanup cost, to a maximum of \$1M, will be covered by DEQ. "There is no penalty to Mr. Shepherd's store because his tank leaked" Sterrett said. "The tank owner must pay the bills associated with the cleanup and can then apply to DEQ for reimbursement. Mr. Shepherd has paid a lot of money out of his pocket to get this work done." Although both Sterrett and Forrer said that they were unaware that J.J Corner Store was currently for sale, Sterrett said that Shepherd will continue to carry personal responsibility for cleanup costs that exceed \$1m even if he were to sell the property unless the new owner was willing to accept the liability. Sterrett said that he could not predict just how long cleanup operations would continue but the average time to cleanup a spill site is about three years. Clarke County Supervisor David Weiss (Buckmarsh) was also present at last night's meeting. Weiss said that he believed that DEQ had been forthright in their response to the spill and in answering citizen's questions at last night's meeting. "I was pleased that so many residents came out tonight and I hope that everyone's questions were answered satisfactorily" Weiss said. "I was glad to hear that DEQ is expanding its well testing beyond the store. I think that will go a long way to alleviate the worries of residents." But despite assurance that everything possible is being done to contain and mitigate the consequences of the spill, at least one resident who lives just north of the store said that he was concerned about the spill's impact on his property values and said between the spill and blasting at a nearby quarry he felt like it was time to leave the area. "Our well was just tested yesterday so we don't know yet if we were affected" said Willie Potter. "Either way I think that it's time to call it quits here."

<http://www.clarkedailynews.com/officials-tell-residents-gasoline-leak-under-control/26903>

CANADA, ONT, TORONTO, NOVEMBER 20 2011. CAR CRASHES INTO GAS PUMP CAUSING A FIRE



A gas pump caught fire and was destroyed after a car crashed into it at an east end gas station early Saturday.

A man was arrested after driving into a gas pump at a gas station near Coxwell Avenue and O'Connor Drive at about 4 a.m. Saturday. Witnesses told police the man smashed right into the gas pump that then caught fire and was completely destroyed. The driver, whose car was badly damaged, fled the scene following the collision. The man was arrested after he drove back to the scene and turned himself in, according to police. Fire crews quickly got the fire under control and no injuries were reported.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/story/2011/11/19/toronto-gas-station-fire.html>

SUDAN, ZARAF, NOVEMBER 20 2011. 100 INJURED IN GASOLINE TANKER EXPLOSION >> CASUALTIES RUSHED TO HOSPITAL WITH ONE DOCTOR AND INSUFFICIENT FACILITIES TO TEND TO LARGE NUMBER OF PATIENTS

At least 100 people were injured, 10 of them severely, when a gasoline tanker exploded in Zarafa area of North Kordofan on Friday, witnesses told Radio Dabanga. Zarafa is an area of gold mining on the border of Darfur and North Kordofan. Witnesses told Radio Dabanga that a tanker filled with gasoline was parked in the local market. "There was some welding work going on nearby. The sparks from the welders caused a fire in the market. People gathered around the tanker to see what was going on and then the tanker exploded," a witness said. He added that the fire engulfed a few shops in the market. The explosion caused the tanker to split in two halves which left over 100 people in the crowd injured. The injured were taken to a private hospital in order to receive treatment. "But there is only one doctor in the hospital who needs to tend to all the casualties. The facilities are insufficient to take stock of the situation," a civilian told Radio Dabanga.

<http://www.radiodabanga.org/node/21089>

CHINA, SHANGHAI, NOVEMBER 20 2011. SHANGHAI REGULATES TREATMENT OF WASTE OIL

wang hongyi

The next week will see specific plans and measures drawn up to put into effect a regulation to prevent the illegal use and collection of restaurants' waste oil, says the Shanghai food safety office. The regulation requires restaurants to install machines that separate oil and grease before those substances enter the city's sewer system, thus making it impossible to re-collect them from that source. The regulation requires restaurants to install the machines by the end of 2012. The new requirement was officially released this past month following 15 days of opinion polling in the city. It marks the city's latest attempt at curbing the use of "gutter oil," or reprocessed kitchen oil that is illegally recycled and then used in restaurant's



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cooking. "It's a tremendous task, one that will have several departments working together," said a commission official who declined to give his name. "We will have a further discussion next week and then make a specific plan about putting the regulation into effect." He said the food-and-drug supervision administration, the public security bureau and other departments will work together to enforce the new rules. About 40,000 restaurants operate in Shanghai. According to Chinese media reports, about 100 tons of waste-cooking oil are produced in the city each day, and less than a third of that is sent to be properly processed. "Kitchen-waste oil contains a large number of toxic and carcinogenic substances, such as aflatoxin," said Feng Xiao, deputy general manager of Shanghai Fucheng Environment Protection Engineering Company. "Gutter oil is difficult to test, which poses great difficulties to the supervision and related departments. "But these separator machines will stop up the loophole where it begins, preventing oil from being reused in kitchens." Wastewater cleaned by the machines will not produce secondary water pollution, said Hua Yuanqi, engineer from the Shanghai Yuantou Environmental Technology Company. And waste oil and grease collected through that process can be used to make biodiesel, he said. But Yuan said it is still expensive to convert waste oil into biodiesel. As for the machines, many companies are now producing them. Even so, small-catering businesses often still find them to be unaffordable. "These devices cost from 20,000 yuan (\$3,120) to 40,000 yuan, which is cheap enough and beneficial to large hotels and restaurants," said Jin Peihua, deputy secretary-general of the Shanghai Restaurants Association. But some smaller restaurants cannot afford the high price." So far, several well-rated hotels and high-end restaurants in the city have installed the devices. Jin called on the government to give small restaurants subsidies to help them meet the requirement.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/usa/china/2011-11/19/content_14123150.htm

CHINA, SHANDONG PROVINCE, XINTAI, NOVEMBER 20 2011. CHEMICAL PLANT BLAST KILLS 14 IN CHINA >> IT SAYS NO POISONOUS OR HARMFUL SUBSTANCES WERE RELEASED. MELAMINE IS A NITROGEN-RICH CHEMICAL USED IN MAKING PLASTICS AND MANY OTHER PRODUCTS.



Firemen try to extinguish the fire at a chemical plant.

Fourteen workers were killed and five injured Saturday in an explosion at a chemical plant in east China, state media reported, citing local authorities. The explosion occurred around 2pm at a melamine production facility in Xintai, in Shandong province, Xinhua news agency reported. Workers were maintaining and repairing a melamine condenser when the blast occurred, Xinhua said, citing a statement by the Xintai city government. Four workers died immediately and a further 10 died in hospital. The five injured were in a stable condition and an investigation into the cause of the accident was under way, Xinhua said. China has a notoriously poor workplace safety record blamed on widespread disregard for basic safety measures as companies chase profits. In September, three people were killed in an explosion

at a privately-owned chemical plant in east China's Jiangxi province. Among other recent deadly industrial accidents, last week at least 34 miners were killed in a blast at coal mine in the southwestern province of Yunnan. In October, 12 workers building an underground parking lot in northeast China were killed when a concrete ceiling collapsed on them. Days earlier another dozen workers died at a steel plant in the eastern city of Nanjing when molten iron spilled from a furnace.

Related Links

- [14 killed in chemical plant explosion](#)
- [Chemical plant blast in China kills 14 workers](#)
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<http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hK7jXSTNyv1pO6CEN5vvYcy8NsgQ?docId=CNG.63bab58d0989befd07c1bee33259a20.921>

USA, PA, PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 20 2011. FIREFIGHTERS RESPOND TO REFINERY FIRE

A small fire broke out inside the Honeywell refinery in Philadelphia early Saturday. The fire was contained to a boiler room that overheated inside the facility on Bridge Street near Tacony Street in Frankford. Honeywell fire crews assisted by the



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Philadelphia Fire Department. The fire and smoke was brought under control around 1:20 in the morning, 25 minutes after the call came in.

<http://abclocal.go.com/wpvi/story?section=news/local&id=8438300>

IRAN, BID GANEH, NOVEMBER 20 2011. IRAN REVISES DEATH TOLL IN BASE BLAST TO 17



In this photo released by an official website of the Iranian supreme leader's office, supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, prays, at the flag draped coffins of a group of members of Revolutionary Guard, in their funeral ceremony, on Monday Nov. 14, 2011, who were killed in an explosion at an ammunition depot west of Tehran on Saturday.

A spokesman for Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has revised down to 17 the number of people killed in an explosion at a military base near Tehran. Ramezan Sharif told the semi-official Fars news agency that a previous death toll of 27 had been given in error. He said at least 15 people were injured. The

explosion occurred at an ammunition depot on the base in Bid Ganeh, near the town of Malard on the western outskirts of Tehran. All the casualties were said to be IRGC members. At least 16 people were also reported wounded in the blast. There were no reports linking the blast to any air strike or other attack, and authorities were said to be treating the blast as an accident. On October 12, 2010, a similar blast at an IRGC munitions store in Khoramabad in western Iran killed and wounded several servicemen.

http://www.rferl.org/content/iran_military_base_blast/24388890.html

BRAZIL, RIO DE JANEIRO, NOVEMBER 20 2011. 110,000 GALLON MAJOR OIL LEAK AT OFFSHORE CHEVRON SITE IN BRAZIL



American oil company Chevron spilled oil off the coast of Rio early this month. The spill is spreading out to sea, far from the beaches of Rio and Espirito Santo states, authorities said Thursday.

A leak at an offshore Chevron drilling site off the coast of [Brazil](#) may have dumped around 110,000 gallons of oil into the Atlantic Ocean, Brazilian officials said Friday. Officials think between 8,400 to 13,800 gallons of oil leaked each day from Nov. 8 through Tuesday, Ibama said in a statement on its website. Chevron had said that only 16,800 to 27,300 gallons in total leaked into the ocean. Officials are still

investigating the cause of the leak, which has been almost entirely contained, but the Ibama statement said it was a result of drilling. An official at Brazil's Federal Police, which has opened an investigation into the spill, said Chevron "drilled about 500 meters (1,640 feet) farther than they were licensed to do." The official, who agreed to discuss the matter only if not quoted by name, said that information came from a person with knowledge of the drilling. The leak occurred at a drilling site about 230 miles (370 kilometers) northeast of Rio de Janeiro. Rio state Environment Minister Carlos Minc said earlier he was sure the leak was larger than Chevron estimated and he called for more transparency from the company. Chevron had said that only 16,800 to 27,300 gallons in total leaked into the ocean. "We can't trivialize this," he told the Globo TV network. "It's really serious and we don't yet know all the consequences." Marine life in the area of the spill will be affected by the leak, Minc said, adding that whales are migrating from north to south through the spill area. The oil slick, which was moving away from the coast, grew to 11 miles (18 kilometers), Ibama said. Most of the oil was concentrated around the drilling rig in a layer about 3 feet (1 meter) thick. Chevron said "current estimates place the volume of the oil sheen on the ocean surface to be less than 65 barrels." The company said it has 18 ships working on a rotating basis to collect oil off the surface and monitor the slick. The drilling contractor for the well is Transocean Ltd., the owner of the [Deepwater Horizon](#) rig that oil company BP PLC was leasing at the time of last year's Gulf of [Mexico](#) oil spill, the largest in U.S. history and one that dwarfs the Brazilian leak. At its peak, BP's Macondo well was spewing more 2 million gallons a day. Chevron said cementing operations were taking place so the well off Brazil is plugged. ANP, Brazil's national petroleum agency, said in a note on its website that "the first stage of cementing, to permanently abandon the well, was successfully completed." The regulator said the success of permanently plugging the well would be known "in the coming days." ANP also said underwater footage showed that a "residual leakage flow" was continuing, but that "the oil slick continues moving away from the coast and is being dispersed, as desired." Fabio



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Scliar, head of the Federal Police's environmental affairs division, which is investigating the case, said those responsible would be held accountable. "There is no doubt that a crime occurred. The spill comes from the drilling activity. What interests me now is to find who is responsible," Scliar was quoted as saying by the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo. It's really serious and we don't yet know all the consequences. - Rio state Environment Minister Carlos Minc The oil is believed to be coming from seep lines in the seafloor near the well and not from the well itself. Natural seeps are common around the world perhaps the most well known in the U.S. is the La Brea Tar Pits in the heart of Los Angeles and are often used by oil companies during undersea exploration to determine where a good prospect for oil drilling may be. Natural seeps are usually so small in volume they don't cause a nuisance beyond producing the periodic tar ball that washes up on a beach. But problems with drilling a well nearby can exacerbate the seeps and cause greater flow of oil, which can be hard to control, said George Hirasaki, a Rice University engineering professor who was involved in the Bay Marchand oil containment effort for Shell off Louisiana in the 1970s. "Anytime there is movement of fluids, even if it didn't go to the surface of the well, the internal flow could result in the fluid going somewhere else," Hirasaki said. "It could move laterally at the same depth or increase the flow rate of natural seeps that are connecting to the surface." Investigators will want to look at whether the weight of the mud being used during the drilling and abandonment operations was sufficient to contain the pressure inside the well, and they will also want to see whether drilling too deep caused problems in a geopressure zone beneath the seafloor, experts said. Ed Overton, a Louisiana State University environmental sciences professor, said that to truly control the leak could be difficult. "If you have this stuff oozing up through the ground you don't have a mechanism for control," Overton said. "If something started that to leak, that would worry me a lot more than a leak around the well. You'd have to drill a relief well and intercept that ooze." People familiar with last year's BP oil spill off Louisiana know about relief wells. BP spent four months drilling a relief well that it used to pump cement under the area that was spewing oil into the Gulf of Mexico, and sealed the leak permanently. Experts said that while there are many physical differences between the BP spill and the Chevron spill, the main common thread is the slow flow of information and different explanations for what happened and the severity of what happened. "There's a pretty long track record of all the people involved in spills underestimating at least initially the size of the spills," Overton said. "I would suspect they literally don't know, so they are trying to figure out." The Chevron leak is smaller than those Brazil has seen in the past. In 2000, crude spewed from a broken pipeline at the Reduc refinery in Rio de Janeiro's scenic Guanabara Bay, spewing at least 344,400 gallons into the water. Just a few months later, more than 1 million gallons of crude burst from a pipeline state-controlled oil company Petrobras into a river in southern Brazil. Brazil's worst oil disaster was in 1975, when an oil tanker from Iraq dumped more than 8 million gallons of crude into the bay and caused Rio's famous beaches to be closed for nearly three weeks.

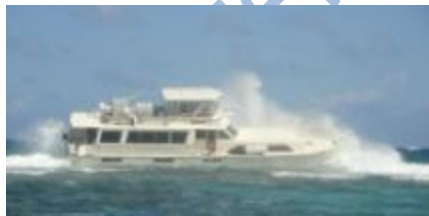
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- [Chevron Error Caused Rio de Janeiro Oil Spill](#)
- [Brazil: Chevron 'was unprepared' for oil spill](#)
- [Oil spill threat in Brazil](#)
- [Chevron Caused Brazil Oil Spill](#)
- [Chevron's Rio Oil Spill Spreading, But Volume Under Control](#)

<http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2011/11/19/major-oil-leak-at-offshore-chevron-site-in-brazil/>

CAYMAN ISLAND [British Overseas Territory], NOVEMBER 21 2011. SANDBAR CLOSED OVER FUEL SPILL

brent fuller



The 'Plight'

Marine police closed off the Sandbar in Cayman's North Sound early Saturday morning due to a shipwreck that caused a significant oil spill, according to officials with the Department of Environment. The 72' foot yacht – 'Plight' – registered out of Port Everglades, Florida was apparently trying to enter the North Sound through the narrow gap in the barrier reef along Grand Cayman's north side overnight Thursday. Department of Environment Chief Enforcement Officer Mark Orr said contracted clean up crews, as well as marine officers, spent most of the day Friday and were out again Saturday trying to clean up wreckage from the large craft as well as floating oil from the accident. "Sections of the boat are still on the reef and [marine crews] are breaking up pieces of the boat and taking them back to



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shore," Mr. Orr said. "I'm picking up a lot of 4x4 pieces in other areas of the sound.' Marine crews were concerned that smaller floating pieces from the 72-foot wrecked craft could damage smaller craft travelling in the North Sound if they struck the debris. Mr. Orr said some of the larger pieces of the wrecked yacht are being brought in to Harbour House Marina as clean up crews also attempt to recover the diesel fuel. "There is some diesel spillage in the sound," Mr. Orr said, but noted he was unsure of the extent of the spill. Two people who were on board the yacht had to be rescued during an overnight operation and were believed to be fine. Apparently, the boaters were attempting a trip from south Florida to Australia, Mr. Orr said. Royal Cayman Islands Police Chief Inspector Raymond Christian said the yacht was carrying about 2,000 gallons of fuel when it crashed. "They're using a vessel from Harbour House Marina to pump off the fuel," Mr. Christian said. Chief Inspector Christian said the large craft had originally intended to stop in Cuba, but a strong nor'easter that blew through on Thursday night forced it to head for safety in Grand Cayman. Mr. Christian said it appeared the yacht crashed into the North Sound barrier reef in between the North West Point channel and the Rum Point channel. He said marine police were still investigating the details of the crash.

<http://www.compasscayman.com/caycompass/2011/11/18/Sandbar-closed-over-fuel-spill/>

USA, PA, DIMOCK TWP, NOVEMBER 20 2011. GAS COMPANY WHISTLE-BLOWER DETAILS SPILLS, ERRORS

laura legerre



Staff Photographer Scott Ely holds a glass of what comes from the aquifer 300 feet beneath his Dimock home.

On a bright fall day in 2008, Scott Ely arrived at the natural gas well a few hundred feet from his home to find work strangely stilled. His fellow employees of Cabot Oil and Gas Corp.'s drilling subsidiary were watching the only thing moving: a huge plume of gas "like Niagara Falls going upwards" buffeting the drilling rig from below, he remembered. The gas in the air was sickening. "They told me they hit a methane pocket," he said. "We're waiting for Cabot to tell us what to do, whether we should try to punch through it or plug it." They punched through it - a pocket of shallow gas about 1,500 feet down that pumped out the equivalent of 900,000 cubic feet of gas per day, according to a report later commissioned by Cabot. When drilling was finished, muddy puddles on the pad bubbled with the gas seeping through the gravel. "Right next to the wellhead it looked like 1,000 Alka-Seltzers going off," he said. Mr. Ely, a GasSearch Drilling Services employee from spring 2008 until mid-2010, is one of more than a dozen Dimock residents suing the company because of what happened next: his family, including three small children, began to get cramps, rashes and headaches. Months after Mr. Ely noted something was not right with his water and first warned his employer

to test it, a company representative asked his family to evacuate to a Tunkhannock hotel because dangerous levels of methane seeped into the home with every shower or load of laundry. Now, state officials have found that Cabot met the obligations necessary for the driller to stop delivering replacement bottled and bulk water to 19 homes, including Mr. Ely's, where the methane tainting the water has been linked to Cabot's faulty wells. Cabot, which says the water is safe to drink and use, plans to stop the deliveries in 10 days.

'We're The Sacrifice'

Long silent about reckless practices, unreported spills and buried problems he said he witnessed on Cabot's well sites, Mr. Ely said the prospect of losing fresh water twice to drilling forced him to speak out. "It's terrible that we're the sacrifice," he said. "We're the sludge that comes off and then we're just washed away." In an interview with The Sunday Times, Mr. Ely outlined allegations he first shared with driller officials and state regulators in the month after his attorneys filed a lawsuit against the driller in November 2009. In the two years since he led the officials on a tour of every failure he witnessed at Cabot's Dimock sites, he said he has received no answers from the company about what they found in the soil and streams. Cabot officials told the newspaper that a report proving its operations had no negative environmental impact is ready to be released this month, but they would not disclose the findings until the final report is submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection.

According to Mr. Ely:

Cabot tried to hide, minimize or ignore at least five diesel spills or their impacts between 2008 and 2009. After an 800-gallon diesel spill in June 2008, a drilling supervisor instructed him to move a reference point hay bale away from a spot where lab tests showed persistently contaminated soil after treatment. "I said, 'So you want them to test where there's no hot dirt?' " he



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recalled. "He said, 'That's the idea.' " Company pits leaked or their plastic liners were carelessly torn before their contents were buried on 13 occasions. The earliest, haphazardly constructed pits were used to catch toxic fluids that flowed out of the wells, but the spray frequently missed the pits or blew out of them. "In the beginning we would dig a hole and then we'd just throw plastic in it," he said. "That was more or less to make the homeowners feel comfortable about us drilling on their property." On at least two occasions, Cabot employees scraped contaminated soil, sand or gravel from a drilling pad then pushed it over the pad's bank. At one site, Mr. Ely watched a bulldozer operator clear a pad covered in a "big, goopy concoction" of sand and spilled gels and acids by pushing the mess over a bank, he said. State files for the second site show that an inspector from the Department of Environmental Protection discovered an unreported pile of diesel-soaked soil dumped at the edge of a farmer's field. Cabot had well-control or casing problems on three wells other than the Gesford 3 site where Mr. Ely saw the plume of shallow gas. A "wild well" specialist from Texas was called to a site on Mr. Ely's father's property in late 2008 after a failed valve made it impossible to shut off the spewing well, forcing the family to evacuate overnight. Something loose in the well jammed the flow, and workers resorted to dumping buckets of methanol on dry ice stacked around the wellhead to freeze it. "That well could have let loose at any moment, at any time," he said. "We didn't know what was stopping it from blowing out of there but we knew the well was full of fluids."

Cabot Files Report

After Mr. Ely described what he saw to Cabot officials, the company contracted the environmental consulting firm URS Corp. to investigate any environmental impacts from the alleged incidents. A final report of the investigation, which was initially outlined by URS in March 2010, will be submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection by Nov. 30, Cabot spokesman George Stark said. "We have worked with the past administration and we're working with this administration to demonstrate soundly that none of the areas laid out in the accusations exceeded the cleanup standards or were outside the norms of protective health and safety," he said. Mr. Stark said the 20-month investigation involved close consultation with the DEP and required a year of groundwater monitoring at one of the suspect sites, but ultimately revealed that "there really wasn't anything there." The company will not release any data from the report before it is submitted to the department, he said. A DEP spokeswoman confirmed that the agency has been in "constant contact" with URS about the investigation and is anticipating "a report to see what steps they have taken as far as all of the violations." "We expect a report shortly as to how they are complying with the recommendations we gave them," spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said. Mr. Stark would not address many of Mr. Ely's specific allegations, since they are dealt with in the report, but said Cabot "takes environmental stewardship seriously and thoroughly investigates all environmental claims." Asked if he disputes that the incidents alleged by Mr. Ely ever happened, Mr. Stark said, "Each of them has been investigated and the resulting analysis shows that either there was something to investigate further or nothing to investigate." He said he would not dispute that shallow gas escaped from the Gesford 3 site, but he challenged Mr. Ely's "visual opinion" of the event. "I'm not saying it didn't happen," he said. "But, if it did occur, we're not aware of any problems as a result of it."

Spills Documented

Many of the spills described by Mr. Ely were also documented during state inspections of the well sites, often after Cabot reported the incidents to regulators. Some of the incidents described by Mr. Ely have already gone through state-reviewed remediation and been cleared, Mr. Stark said. According to agency records, the DEP issued violations at Cabot sites for at least 51 separate incidents involving spills, seeps or releases between 2008 and 2010, including after a July 2009 inspection found stained sand on the well site where Mr. Ely said the "goopy" concoction was later pushed off site. In a document compiled for the federal Environmental Protection Agency, Cabot reported 19 spills and releases of hazardous substances or wastewater at its Susquehanna County well sites and 14 additional spills "where Cabot does not have sufficient information to confirm that a release of a hazardous substance ... occurred" between June 2008 and May 2011. The company explicitly did not include instances of methane migration into water supplies in its EPA report because "Cabot disputes the validity of these allegations," the company wrote. Cabot claims elevated levels of methane reach Dimock water supplies through natural pathways. It has produced data showing detectable amounts of methane naturally occur in 80 percent of the water wells it has tested in Susquehanna County in a geological pattern that mirrors the occurrences in Dimock. Cabot was forced by the DEP to plug three of its gas wells suspected of allowing methane to taint water supplies, including the Gesford 3 and 9, the twin wells where Mr. Ely saw the methane plume and where Cabot lost a drill bit in unconsolidated rock about 800 feet down. In correspondence with the DEP in September 2010, Cabot called the three wells "safe, properly constructed and valuable" even though the company proposed earlier the same year to drill a relief water well at the Gesford pad "in an attempt to degas the aquifer," according to DEP documents. "The department has many reservations concerning this course of action," a regional



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DEP oil and gas manager wrote. The last three years in Dimock have been remarkably caustic, with the driller at times pitted against state regulators and neighbors who embrace the company at odds with those suing it. Mr. Ely has stood at the heart of that division. A Dimock native whose grandparents' name was given to a creek that runs through town, he is building a new house and raising a family on his father's homestead. With a speciality in spill prevention and response for gas stations and other petroleum services, he joined GasSearch as a heavy equipment operator and later helped set up the subsidiary's drilling rigs. He found that the companies working on the drilling sites "had no care for what spilled anywhere. It was the most reckless industry I've ever seen in my life," he said. "I stood up because I couldn't see them just wrecking everybody's properties." The roles he has been given in the last few years have forced him to split his loyalties: a leaseholder with tainted water, an employee of the company blamed for the contamination, a plaintiff in the case against his employer, a neighbor trying to protect his neighbors and, in return, being accused of blowing their best chance at financial comfort. "I'm not against the oil industry," he said. "I am not against any of my neighbors extracting the gas from the land to achieve wealth, small or large. I am not here to deprive them at all of that." In fact, he said, "I know they can do this in a safe manner" and in many ways he has seen that Cabot and others have improved: The driller no longer uses pits and now uses liners and other containments on its well pads to protect against spills reaching the ground. "Things are different because of what happened at the beginning," he said. "Things are different because we spoke out." He fears that the state will set a low bar for the Marcellus Shale industry if the DEP does not change course and require Cabot to continue water deliveries - something DEP Secretary Michael Krancer says he will not do because Cabot met the legal obligations outlined in an order drafted during the Rendell Administration. According to the order, Cabot could stop the deliveries after it offered to install methane-removal systems and funded escrow accounts with twice the tax-assessed value of each affected home. The quality of the residents' drinking water was not a factor in that aspect of the agreement. "How can they retract all that science?" Mr. Ely said of the DEP's record of Cabot's violations. "They can't go through and say that Cabot's findings clear them of all charges." On a cold morning last week, he pulled the handle on a spout above his water well and let the water run for half an hour. Clear and effervescent for more than 20 minutes, the spray of water then turned a milky brown. He caught it in a glass. "All we want is water," he said, standing outside his soaring, half-finished home that is waiting for its brick walls. "We are pleading for help. We are on our last straw."

<http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/gas-company-whistle-blower-details-spills-errors-1.1234817#axzz1eF8Q6TMe>

AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, NEWCASTLE, NOVEMBER 21 2011. O'FARRELL DEFENDS PARKER AT ORICA INQUIRY

NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell has described delays in telling residents about a Newcastle chemical leak as completely and utterly unacceptable. However, he defended his embattled environment minister Robyn Parker for her role in the Orica debacle, saying she was following advice from her agency by waiting to notify the public. Mr O'Farrell told a parliamentary inquiry into the August 8 leak that "no one should be happy" about the delays in notifying nearby Stockton residents of the leak. It took Orica until the next day, a Tuesday, to notify the government's Office of Environment and Heritage. It wasn't until Thursday afternoon that Ms Parker made a public statement about the accident in parliament. Mr O'Farrell laid blame for the delay with Orica and various government agencies, who did not notify the relevant ministers, including Ms Parker, until Wednesday night - two days after the leak. "The delay in notifying the minister, the delay in notifying the premier... was completely and utterly unacceptable," Mr O'Farrell told the committee on Monday. "But understand, no government agency was responsible for this spill. Understand ... there just appeared to be a complete and utter breakdown or some cavalier attitude by the company involved. "The failing here, whilst shared by government agencies, was a failing of Orica's making." However, asked whether Ms Parker had failed the Stockton community by taking so long to make her public statement, Mr O'Farrell defended his minister. "Presumably the minister was advised by her agency, the Office of Environment and Heritage, presumably the minister took that advice and the next day ... a statement was made," he said. Ms Parker will give evidence later in the day.

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/ofarrell-defends-parker-at-origa-inquiry-20111121-1nq37.html>



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