By Rosemary Horvath
Herald Staff Writer

Seville Township has been ordered to address a long-known problem of human sewage draining from inadequate septic systems on private properties into the Pine River and an adjacent tributary in the Riverdale area. The Water Resources Division of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has requested the township file a community-wide solution by Jan. 18, that addresses the unlawful discharges under the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act and the State of Michigan Water Quality Standards.

According to state law, the township, as well as individual property owners, may be held responsible for the discharges and for the remedies.

A certified letter dated Dec. 11 was mailed to township Supervisor David Owens. Several messages left on his home voicemail were not answered prior to a deadline for this story.

Township Trustee Tish Mallory on Monday said township officials are aware of the letter but unsure what action to take. Officials are in the process of investigating the situation, she said.

Seville Township, under a former board, contracted with the Spicer Group to assess the costs of a sanitary sewer system for Riverdale.

Mallory said the Spicer study was released in 2012 but not acted upon due to the $4 million estimated cost of a project.

According to the MDEQ letter, of the 94 homes in Riverdale on septic systems, the Mid Michigan District Health Department only has records for 25 of them. Of these, 18 had the installation of their septic system approved before the year 2000 and have not been inspected by the MMDHD since.

The letter further states rehabilitation or replacement of individual on-site disposal systems does not appear to be a feasible, long-term solution due to factors such as lot size, a high-water table, and the number of systems in failure.

Alma College environmental students and MDEQ technicians have sampled water at different locations of the Pine River for several years. High degrees of E. coli has registered both from animal and human sources.

Monitoring results and field observations by both DEQ and the health department led to the DEQ’s recent action, the letter stated.

Monitoring conducted in the Pine River off River Street showed an exceedance of the total body contact beyond the maximum of 300 CFU/100 mL for E. coli.

Both the MMDHD and WRD staff observed evidence of sewage discharges, such as bacterial slimes and the odor of sewage, at several locations on the south side of Riverdale.

Lumberjack Road catch basins at several locations registered varying degrees of E. coli from the highest of 25,000 CFU/100 mL last February. The lowest sample taken was in September of 1,986 CFU/100 mL at the Fifth Street storm drain discharge. CFU stands for Colony Forming Units and refers to the...
number of viable bacterial cells in a sample per unit of volume. DEQ Environmental Quality Analyst Cheri Meyer at the Water Resources Division replied in an email that the purpose of the letter from the Water Resources Division “was not related to any funding opportunities but to ensure sewage discharges cease to ensure Water Quality Standards are met and to protect public health and safety.” Meyer stated the DEQ in October 2017 received a complaint by a resident in Riverdale that sewage was discharging across his property and into the Pine River. “Since that date, the MMDHD and the DEQ have sampled for E.coli and Fecal Coliforms, and conducted field investigations. Based on the documentation we have, it is the DEQ’s position that a community-wide system is needed to cease discharges of sewage from failing septic systems to the Pine River, as replacing individual failing septic systems does not appear to be a feasible solution. We are asking the Township to submit a plan for how they will proceed.”
Montcalm County board OKs electronic recycling hike

ELISABETH WALDON
ewaldon@staffordgroup.com

STANTON — The cost of electronic recycling is increasing in Montcalm County — but not without debate by county officials.

The Montcalm County Board of Commissioners on Monday voted 6-2 to approve a recommendation by the county’s Economic Development & Physical Resources Committee on Dec. 3 to approve an electronic recycling cost increase from 25 cents per pound to 62 cents per pound.

Comprenew in Grand Rapids increased Montcalm County’s electronic recycling rate effective Nov. 15, so the cost is being passed on to consumers.

Comprenew President Scott VanderKooy previously told the Daily News the logistical costs of recycling have increased “dramatically” throughout the United States since the start of 2018. He said Comprenew lost 32 cents per pound in residential recycling throughout 2018, but they didn’t increase prices on municipalities until the contracts expired.

The Montcalm County Board of Commissioners voted 6-2 to approve an electronic recycling cost increase from 25 cents per pound to 62 cents per pound. The rate was increased for the county by Comprenew in Grand Rapids, so the cost is being passed on to consumers. Electronic recycling remains available at the health department in Stanton now through March 29 via appointment by calling (989) 831-3635. — DH file photo

VanderKooy explained Montcalm County is considered mostly a “residential stream” of electronic recycling, as opposed to a “corporate stream.” Residential recycling weighs more than corporate recycling due to a large amount of cathode ray tubes (CRTs) from old televisions and outdated computers. Corporate recycling is mostly comprised of flatscreen technology — such as laptop computers, desktop computers and networking gear — most of which still have value.

Commissioner Ron Baker of Howard City was against approving the cost increase.

“It seems to me that there should be other places that might offer a better deal,” he said. “I think more research should go into this situation and I think we should look for some other places. I think we need a better deal because I don’t think people will come up with that kind of money. The stuff will just go in the dump or the garage or whatever. I don’t agree with that at all.”

“If you want to recycle your electronics, that’s the price you have to pay, or you have

Continues on Page 3
Montcalm County OKs electronic recycling cost hike

Continued from Page 1

to dump them in your trash,” noted Commissioner Tom Lindeman of Greenville, who is a member of the county’s Solid Waste Management Committee.

“Passing this for 62 cents is the only thing we have right now,” agreed Commissioner Ron Retzloff of Evergreen Township, regarding the county’s limited options.

“If we get somebody to throw out a refrigerator near my house, we can have a man cave — somebody else already dumped a couch over there,” Commissioner Patrick Q. Carr of Lakeview dryly observed to laughter from his colleagues and the audience.

Baker said residents in Morley can currently dispose of their electronics “for free,” however; Commissioner Betty Kellenberger of Carson City said someone is certainly paying for this service, likely Mecosta County.

Commissioners voted 6-2 to approve the electronic recycling cost increase, with Baker and Carr voting “no” and Commissioner Tom Porter of Coral absent.

Commissioners also voted 8-0 to approve a letter from the Mid-Michigan District Health Department terminating without cause the health department’s agreement with Montcalm County to provide recycling services due to a staffing shortage in the health department’s environmental health division. The last day the health department will provide recycling services to Montcalm County will be March 29.

Members of the Montcalm Conservation District has expressed interest in a shared recycling coordinator with the county and is continuing to discuss the topic.

Electronic recycling remains available at the health department in Stanton now through March 29 via appointment by calling (989) 831-3635. Visit www.mmdhd.org/recycling for more information.
GRATIOT COUNTY

Contractor expected to produce savings at Velsicol site

By Sun staff reports

A new contractor is expected to save nearly a million dollars at the Velsicol cleanup site in Gratiot County.

Cascade Thermal, recommended by Jacobs, the EPA’s design contractor, was approved to do the work of designing the in-place thermal treatment for a section of the former plant site. The company will realize its savings because it is already doing work in a different section, reducing mobilization and start up times.

Cascade Thermal is developing the design for the 3 acres that make up the new section and is
expected to be done in two phases. Drilling is expected to begin in March 2019, with completion around fall 2021. Progress in the new section is going as planned. EPA does not expect any issues with funding.

The Agency will request additional funding in 2021 to remove 100,000 tons of contaminated soil from potential sources of contamination in both sections. EPA also continues to work with the city of St. Louis on constructing a new well for drinking water to improve water capacity and reliability for the Gratiot Area Water Authority.

By the end of this year, EPA expects to receive the Ecological Risk Assessment from Dr. Matthew Zwierink. The Agency has also created a proposal with Jacobs and Dr. Stephen Boyd of Michigan State University to fund a pilot study evaluating the use of carbon-based materials to remove DDT in floodplain soil. Bank sampling near the high school athletic fields has been completed with results expected in spring 2019.

EPA continues to work with the owner of a nearby property for the installation of an access road into the site as well as with the owners of the golf course on site preparation and placement of the in-place thermal treatment system.

EPA has completed surveying the nine locations where municipal water will be provided to residents and expects the design for the drinking water replacement to be completed by early summer 2019.
In 1997, Jane Keon went to a meeting in St. Louis where U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officials were telling residents there was no need to cleanup sediment from the Pine River below the city’s municipal dam adjacent to the former Velsicol Chemical plant site.

However, when she heard the results of an EPA study, Keon felt she had to get involved.

“Instead of a few hundred parts per million DDT (in the sediment), EPA found 36,000-42,000 parts per million,” she said. “I knew Mother Nature couldn't fix that.

“There was a sign-up sheet for people interested in starting a Community Advisory Group and I signed up.”

The rest as they say is history. Keon became a founding member of the Pine River Superfund Citizen's Task Force, which led to the $100 million multi-year cleanup of the river.

For her efforts, Keon was recently elected to the PRCTF Hall of Fame.

During her acceptance speech, she told of about how the group named itself in 1998, calling itself a “task force” because members expected the task of cleaning up the chemical waste from Velsicol would take about five years and then they would move on to other things.

It's now been 20 years, and although

By Greg Nelson
gnelson@digitalfirstmedia.com

Jane Keon of St. Louis was recently inducted into the Pine River Superfund Citizen’s Task Force Hall of Fame. She was presented the award by the group’s chairman, James Hall.

COURTESY PHOTO
“much had been accomplished,” it’s taken a lot more than the amount of time initially expected, Keon said.

Current EPA project manager for the Velsicol site was complimentary of Keon’s work over the years.

“The hours she has spent on this, along with her influence, has done great service to the community,” he said.

Keon served as the task force chairperson for 12 years, from 2002-2014, and as it’s secretary, from 1998-2002 and again from 2014 until the present.

She also has written a book, “Tombstone Town,” detailing the first 16 years of the task force.

Keon was born and raised in Alma graduating from Alma High School and then attending Alma College for two years.

She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degree in English literature from Michigan State University in 1973 and 1975 respectively.

Keon taught Freshman Composition at Alma College part-time for 27 years. She also was the owner of the Book Shoppe in downtown Alma in the 1980s, and was a reporter for the Morning Sun, Gratiot County Herald and Saginaw News during the 1990s.

She has lived in St. Louis for 29 years.

Being honored or winning awards are nothing new for Keon.

In 2011, she received the Spirit of St. Louis Award, the city’s top citizen honor, the Alma College Community Service Award and the Philo Media Award for the video she produced, “Mineral Springs to Toxic Town.”

Keon also received recognition from the Chipewa Watershed Conservancy for her work on the Pine River in 2014 and was named a Public Health Champion by the Mid-Michigan District Health Department in 2016.

She becomes the seventh member of the task force hall of fame.
Landfill Tests Positive for PFAS

The Ithaca Sanitary Landfill in Newark Township, located behind Gratiot County Animal Control on Washington Road, tested positive for perfluorinated chemicals, or PFAS, where tannery waste was dumped by the former Ithaca Wolverine shoe manufacturer decades ago.

The samples persuaded the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to extend an investigation to include 12 homes and the animal control facility in the area, as well as the water supplier of the cities of Alma and St. Louis.

Chemicals were not detected in the drinking water samples from the latest group. The good news related to the surface water at the landfill is that the PFAS presence has not moved away from the site.

However, DEQ will continue monitoring the surface and groundwater as a precaution.

Michigan has taken the lead in recognizing the presence of this group of toxic chemicals commonly used in various consumer products that are water-resistant, fire resistant and stain resistant. Hence, this is why the many locations of the Wolverine shoe company, both current and former, have tested for PFAS. Some locales have had to find alternate water supplies for their main source of drinking water.

All municipal water systems and school buildings this year were tested from southern counties to the north in the state.
PINE RIVER TASK FORCE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS

In this overview map of the former Velsicol Chemical plant site and surrounding areas in St. Louis, OU-1 — operational unit 1 — is the former plant site scheduled for cleanup in 2014. That includes the parking lot and residential neighborhood, scheduled for cleanup this year and next. OU-2 is the Pine River section that has already been cleaned up but still needs monitoring. OU-3 is the river downstream from the St. Louis Dam, which will likely be cleaned up.

By Greg Nelson
gnelson@digitalfirstmedia.com

When the Pine River Superfund Citizen’s Task Force was formed in St. Louis 20 years ago, members thought it might take five years to get contamination from the former Velsicol Chemical Co. plant site and other locations throughout Gratiot County cleaned up.

Were they in for a shock.

Now, here it is 2018, and the group is celebrating its 20th anniversary.

Little did they realize in those formative years the amount and the various types of toxic chemicals contained on the 52-acre parcel, the adjacent Pine River and other spots in the area.

The task force is recognized as the officially sanctioned Community Advisory Group to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which along with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, has been working to remediate local contaminated sites.

“We formed to oversee the cleanup of the chemical pollution left behind by the Velsicol Chemical Corporation,” founding member and current Secretary Jane Keon said. “That remains our primary focus and goal.

“About 12 people attended the first meeting (in 1998). At present, we have about 35 dues-paying members, with several hundred on our mailing list.”

The former plant site has a long history of environmental issues dating back to when Michigan Chemical Co. was manufacturing DDT there.

However, the most well known health-related problem happened in 1973 when the PBB disaster occurred.

That’s when a fire retardant...
Task Force
FROM PAGE 1

was accidentally mixed with cattle feed, which was distributed throughout the state casing havoc in the dairy and cattle industries.

The mistake was not discovered until a year later resulting in thousands of cattle being destroyed.

Testing also indicated that more than 97 percent of Michigan's human population had detectable levels on PBB in their blood, which has been passed on to future generations.

The plant was closed in 1978 but that was only the beginning of what was to come.

All of the facilities were demolished and buried on the property, and a slurry wall and clay cap installed in an effort to contain the contaminants on the site.

It didn't work.

Later studies indicated the wall was leaking hazardous chemicals into the Pine River with others seeping into the groundwater.

That’s how the EPA became involved and resulted in the formation of the task force.

In 1999, the group learned that Total Refinery had been fined $13.5 million for air pollution. It applied for a Supplemental Environmental Project to have Horse Creek, which crosses Michigan Avenue near the Evergreen Mobile Home Park, cleaned up.

The U.S. Department of Justice awarded the project $6 million and also gave $600,000 to the city of Alma to pay for moving Alma Iron and Metal from off the banks of the Pine River.

In 2001, the task force filed a claim against Fruit of the Loom after it learned of the company's connection to the Velsholc pollution, but a judge through the case out of court.

“Next we wrote letters to several federal agencies about how money from the Fruit of the Loom bankruptcy should come to our town for (the cleanup) of our sites,” Keon said.

“In 2002, the DOJ determined that many millions should go to each of the Velsholc sites in Michigan, Illinois, Tennessee and New Jersey. Our sites were awarded the biggest share, and we later learned that was done because we had filed a claim and written the detailed letters.

“We were supposed to get $60 million. Velsholc and FTL wiggled out of much of that.”

When the task force learned that Oxford Automotive in Alma was filing for bankruptcy the group filed another claim.

“This time the judge didn't throw it out and even offered us lawyers to work with us pro bono,” Keon said. “Oxford settled with us for almost $100,000. That money went to the task force and not for EPA.”

Since 1998, more than $190 million has been spent on various cleanup projects in the area. And there is still much more to do.

In addition to the river, plant site and Horse Creek, others where work has already taken place or is ongoing include a radioactive site between Breckenridge and St. Louis along Horse Creek, the “Burn Pit” near the Hidden Oaks golf Course in St. Louis, the Smith Farm and former Gratiot County Landfill, both in Bethany Township, replacement of the St. Louis municipal water system, excavation of contaminated sediment in a 12-block St. Louis residential neighborhood and the high school athletic fields, and the Pine River downstream from the St. Louis dam.

Health studies for St. Louis residents and former plant employees are also in the works.

Many of these won't be completed for years.

And the task force plans to be around until its mission is finished, no matter how long that might take.

“One of our biggest accomplishments is to remain cohesive all these years,” Keon said.

“A sociologist from (Michigan State University) said it is a given that groups formed around a cause never last longer than seven years. “People have moved away, of course, and died, and one or two have quit, but most of us are still active.”
Septic System Regulations Challenge
Officials

A 13-member committee representing Gratiot, Clinton and Montcalm counties began exploring the impact of failing septic systems in areas throughout the Mid-Michigan District Health Department in February. This follows several years of sampling water from waterways in the three counties. In Gratiot County alone, samples taken from the Pine River by Alma College students and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality over several years showed high levels of E. coli bacteria from human and animal waste.

Goal of the committee is to develop and recommend strategies the Board of Health could use to update its sanitary code draft regulating septic systems. Committee members represent a cross-section of interests from real estate sales to agriculture to residential ownership.

The added regulations would strengthen or replace existing environmental health regulations for the district. Michigan is the only state in the union without a statewide sanitary code. District 70 Rep. Jim Lower met with local groups about a sanitary code changes and would introduce legislation in 2018 to fill this void.

The citizens committee would meet five times between February and April with a Lansing consulting firm to produce a 28-page report Failing Septic Systems in Mid-Michigan: An Unseen Threat to Public Health.

Consultants and health department officials in the coming months would speak at public hearings hosted by the Board of Health to inform property owners why the report came about and what the solutions are. Orderliness, however, was replaced with chaos as irate property owners verbally attacked health officials and accused them of a power grab.

By December, the Board of Health abandoned its plan to implement new regulations but vowed to pick up the measure again in 2019. At the same time, Rep. Lower’s proposed legislation failed to pick up support in the Legislature.
DECEMBER

Seville Township Alerted to Failing Septic Systems in Riverdale Area

The Seville Township Board of Trustees will be working with the Mid-Michigan District Health Department and Riverdale residents to find a solution for failing septic systems on private properties in the Riverdale area.

The township board received a notice in December from the Department of Environmental Quality Water Resources Division that requested a long-term strategy to eliminate the sewage discharges to the Pine River and an adjacent tributary.

A problem of failing septic systems was known nearly a decade ago when a previous township board hired an engineering firm to study the situation and recommend a solution. No action was taken based on the sizeable expense of a community sanitary treatment system.

The Dec. 11 certified letter indicated rehabilitation or replacement of individual on-site disposal systems is not a feasible, long-term solution due to factors such as lot size, a high-water table, and the number of systems in failure.

It only took four failing systems to generate the DEQ determination that Riverdale has an immediate and substantial public health risk. In reality, there are many more above the minimum causing the health risk.

The local health department has been working for more than a year with Riverdale property owners who have agreed to have the drains pumped and waste hauled away. Officials said due to the high water table, small parcels and economic situation, property owners are unable to implement a solution quickly.
Sharps Disposal Program

Mid-Michigan District Health Department
615 N. State Street • Stanton, MI 48888
(Once inside the building, follow the signs to Environmental Health)
Hours: 8:00 a.m. to noon and 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Questions? Call 989-831-3669

Accepted Containers
Sharps MUST be in a medical sharps container, a metal coffee can or plastic laundry/fabric softener jug.

Loose sharps, or those in boxes, bags, etc. will not be accepted.

This is a free service for Montcalm County residents. Not for commercial use.
PFAS, Flint, the Line 5 pipeline in the straits of Mackinac.
These recent situations have shed light on how we protect Michigan’s water – a precious natural resource that citizens drink, cook with, swim in and use to clean themselves – from hazardous contaminants and unwanted material. Dilapidated and failing Michigan septic systems are also a real and often overlooked problem that jeopardizes public health. Many private, individual systems are located near streams, rivers, ponds, lakes and wells. Each year, 5.2 billion gallons of raw septic waste ends up in Michigan water. The Flat River and Pine River have been flagged for E. coli, making it unsafe for recreational activity like swimming and fishing.
That’s why I will continue to work on a plan going forward into the new legislative term that would develop a uniform and cohesive statewide septic code for Michigan. Our state’s towns, villages and counties are currently forced to come up with a patchwork set of regulations on their own. Some are doing an admirable and effective job while others are going too far or setting priorities elsewhere, as there are only so many departmental bodies, hours and dollars to go around at the local level.
It is important to establish guidelines with concise language while featuring the important aspect of local control. My proposal clearly defines what a system failure is, adds education requirements for local health departments and creates an online database for onsite wastewater systems that will evaluate function level and allow for better tracking across the state. These are centralized concepts that would be consistent statewide, but implementation and enforcement will stay with local health departments through the public health code. These changes would not add costs for homeowners.
It is also essential to protect private property rights while also protecting our water. The rights of homeowners should not be infringed upon, but with
improved methods of identifying and addressing failing or failed systems, we’ll be able to pinpoint problems. There are two roads ahead in the future of Michigan’s natural resources – one where we put forth thought-out, preventative measures for protection and another in which we are discarding the idea of danger only to pay for it later. I thank Governor Rick Snyder for his help on this issue and look forward to working with Governor-elect Whitmer. This is not a partisan issue, but a quality of life issue. I want to continue this conversation to help keep Michigan residents healthy and raw sewage out of our water, while continuing to uphold our state’s moniker of “Pure Michigan.” Let’s not let stuff fall through the cracks – and I mean that very literally.
Health Department Stars

The Mid-Michigan District Health Department held its annual district-wide meeting on Nov. 2, 2018, at which Outstanding Performance and Years of Service awards were presented. The following employees received awards and are appreciated for their dedication to public health and for serving the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm counties. At top, Outstanding Performance Awards were presented to, from left, Andrea Tabor, Community Health and Education Division director (Health Officer’s Award); Tracey Larabel, accounting clerk II (Administrative Division Outstanding Performance); Courtney Beagle, Public Health representative II (Community Health and Education Division Outstanding Performance); and Nathan Jammer, Environmental Health specialist I (Environmental Health Outstanding Performance). At bottom, Years of Service awards were presented to, left to right, Erin Morgan, Community Health worker (10 years); Lisa Mikessell, Community Health nurse III (10 years); Samantha Tran, Public Health representative II (10 years); Andrew Holdeman, IT specialist (5 years); and Charity Little, Environmental Health specialist II (10 years). Not pictured is Lisa Smith, Public Health representative II (10 years). — Submitted photos
HEALTHY PINE RIVER GROUP TO RELEASE STUDY RESULTS

Some details released, complete results to be presented at Thursday public forum.

As expected, pollutants in the Upper Pine River Watershed are coming from both human and animal sources.

The Healthy Pine River group commissioned a study of the area last year by Streamsides Ecological Services, an independent company in Lowell.

The complete results will be presented at a public forum set for 7 p.m. Thursday at the Alma Public Library.

The Gratiot County Conservation District is serving as fiscal manager for the study, which was paid for with federal grant dollars.

Contaminants in the river are coming from human, cattle and swine, according to the report. However, no pollutants from horses were found.

The update will include information collected from a survey, during which stream banks, wild land and farm property were observed, cataloged and enumerated.

Results of E. coli sampling, which has been a problem in many spots along the river, will also be released.

Streamsides Ecological Services specializes in aquatic and wetland biology. It has over 10 years of experience assisting similar groups develop watershed plans.

The Upper Pine River from St. Louis to Riverdale has been sampled and studied by Alma College faculty and students for the past 15 years. More recently the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has gotten involved.

Just a year ago sampling by the MDEQ showed that 12 of the 13 tributaries of the Pine River are contaminated above acceptable levels of E. coli bacteria.

Studies began when algae blooms started choking off portions of the river, which resulted in an enormous increase in E. coli levels, especially after heavy rains.

The testing scale, a level of 300 is considered unsafe for human contact. In some parts of the river the levels are much higher. One spot measured at over 7,000 last June.

Some strains of E. coli produce a powerful toxin that damages the lining of the small intestine.

Honeyoeve Creek near Alger Road in Alma, Sugar Creek on Cheesman Road, and Horse Creek near the Evangearle Village Mobile Home Park on Michigan Avenue have been some of the “hot spots” where E. coli levels have been high during the summer months.

Although thus far there has been no proof many suspect faulty septic systems and runoff from agricultural land along the river are contributing factors.

The MDEQ and the U.S Environmental Protection Agency will have to approve the watershed plan, Healthy Pine River Chairman Gay Rayburn said in a press release.

Once the group gets the OK “we’ll be eligible for state and federal grant money to help us get the river back to the way it should be,” he added.
STATE BRIEFS

State health officials warn of increasing norovirus activity

Health officials in Michigan are warning that a virus that causes vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramping is making its rounds.

Michigan’s Health and Human Services department has identified increases in norovirus activity, which often peaks during the winter.

The viruses also can cause low-grade fever, headache, weakness and muscle aches. Symptoms can begin as early as 12 hours after exposure to the virus or as late as 72 hours. They usually last one to three days. The state says that in most cases, ill individuals fully recover without medical attention.

Norovirus easily is spread through food, by person-to-person contact or through contaminated surfaces. Officials say frequent hand-washing for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm running water is the best way to limit the spread of the norovirus.

____________________________________
— The Associated Press
GRATIOT

MDEQ to require Ithaca to cleanup former landfill

By Greg Nelson
gnelson@digitalfirstmedia.com

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality is requiring the city of Ithaca to cleanup a former landfill a couple of miles west of town.

The site, located behind the Gratiot County Animal Shelter at 2675 W. Washington Rd., was operational from the 1960s through the 1970s and is still owned and maintained by the city.

City officials were informed in a letter from the agency that it “considers the city of Ithaca responsible for the contamination.”

Groundwater samples collected on the property were above generic cleanup criteria and screening levels for perfluorooctanic acid and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid.

Both are part of the PFAS family of chemicals and are considered “hazardous substances” under the Environmental Remediation of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, the letter stated.

It went on to say the concentration of those chemicals make is a "DUMP » PAGE 2"
MORNING SUN FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2019

Obituaries

85-year-old Hattie Swindlehurst's grisly murder, taking some of the marijuana and passing them to him while pledging loyalty to Quezada, caused her to fall onto the floor, and that Quezada told Moore. He went back to his sister's house, Quezada said he saw her unconscious. He cut her wrists open and she bled to death. It's hard to get people to present. Fifteen members of Swindlehurst's great-grandchildren attended his funeral.

In an exchange of text messages, Snow Snake offers, “It’s hard to get people to vying up the alcohol and money they got, Quezada in recent years, authorities started forcing some of the marijuana to people present. It does not cause unacceptable risk, and that if allowed to leave prison would move into a home, covered in blood. He woke up minutes before arguing with Moore, and that Quezada told Moore. Quezada told Moore that Christian he believes that non-detect levels for PFAS are the same compound as one identified as complying with the provisions of the Act,” the letter continued. “Since environmental contamination is present on the property the city of Ithaca also has a responsibility as the owner or operator of the property to take certain measures, commonly called due care, to ensure that existing contamination on the property does not cause unacceptable risks and is not exacerbated,” the letter continued.

Michigan’s cleanup standard for groundwater used for drinking water is 70 parts per trillion of PFASs. Five of the eight MDEQ test sites at the former landfill showed PFAS levels above 100 parts per trillion or more, with one having 7,300 parts per trillion. On the positive side, followup tests conducted by the agency of 13 residential wells near the site showed “non-detect” levels for PFAS. In his city council report last week City Manager Chris Yonker said the city “will likely be referring with an environmental consultant to assist with complying with provisions of the law. If the city believes it cannot afford to pay for remediation of the property or other required work it can apply for a “financial valuation” from the MDEQ. That includes supplying the agency with “financial statements, bond prospectuses and budgets for fund expenditures for the past three years,” the MDEQ letter stated.

The city staff is in the process of gathering the requested documents for the agency to review, Yonker said. However, “there is no guarantee the city will receive funding assistance from the MDEQ,” he added. The city has until Jan. 26 to submit the requested materials.