

GRATIOT COUNTY

Work set to resume at former Velsicol plant site

By Greg Nelson

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After a few months off, work is set to resume at the former Velsicol Chemical Co. plant site in St. Louis next week.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency contractor Cascade Thermal is completing the design for the in-place thermal treatment system for a three-acre parcel known as Area 2.

Due to the size, the cleanup will be done in two phases, according to EPA Community Involvement

Coordinator Diane Russel.

“The drilling of the heaters and extraction wells to remove both vapor and groundwater will begin the week of March 25,” she said. “Drilling is expected to take most of the summer and soil heating for the first phase is set to begin sometime in October 2019.

“Heating of the soil for the second phase is expected to begin in August 2020 and the project is expected to be done in October 2021.”

The process requires the soil to be heated to a temperature of

217 degree Fahrenheit using more than 8,000,000 kilowatt hours of electricity, which cost about \$125,000 a week for the remediation of Area 1.

The total estimated cost of the Area 2 cleanup is \$25 million, which the EPA already has the funds for, Russell said.

The EPA wrapped up the remediation of the one-acre Area 1 last fall. But Area 2 is three times larger.

“Area 2 is the former location of DDT production on the plant

PLANT » PAGE 2



Cleanup at the former Velsicol Chemical site in St. Louis. The total estimated cost of the Area 2 cleanup is \$25 million.

COURTESY PHOTO

Plant

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site, and it includes DDT-laced NAPL (non-aqueous phase liquid) at 99 feet below ground surface," Pine River Superfund Citizens Task Force Secretary Jane Keon said.

Area 1 had just more than 200 wells, while Area 2 will need up to 700 wells

drilled for the treatment, she added.

While nearly 30 tons of contaminated soil was removed from Area 1, about 100,000 tons is set to be removed from Area 2 in 2021.

The EPA must still request funding for that portion of the work, Russell said.

Once Area 2 is complete the agency will turn its attention to what is known as the "Velsicol Burn Pit" near

Hidden Oaks Golf Course across the Pine River west of the plant site.

The approximately six-acre parcel was used by Velsicol to incinerate various contaminants from the plant a number of years ago.

The EPA is negotiating a right-of-way with a property owner in the area to install an access road to the site.

The same type of in-place thermal treatment system used at on the plant prop-

erty will be used to cleanup the Burn Pit.

However, due to the amount of electricity that will be used in the Area 2 remediation, work will not begin until at least late 2021, Russell said.

Also, funding still must be secured, she added.

The EPA is continuing to work with the city of St. Louis on the construction of another drinking water well to improve the capac-

ity and reliability of the Gratiot Area Water Authority.

The city has long range plans to develop the former plant site as a park. It includes using 21 acres for soccer fields and basketball courts, five acres for an amphitheater and nine acres for generic park use.

It also hopes to install three fishing platforms, a boat launch and educational center.

In addition, the city is in-

terested in acquiring nearby property so the park could be connected via a walkway to the downtown area.

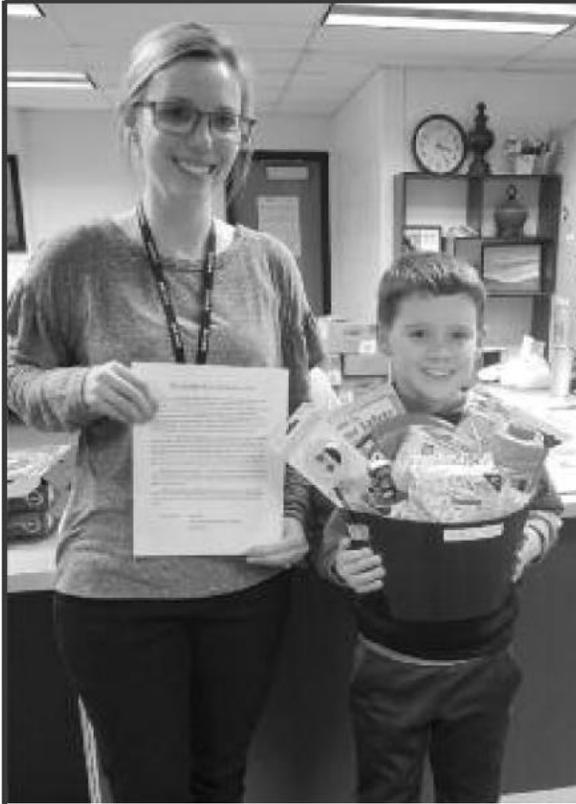
However, because the cleanup is expected to take a number of years to complete, no funds have yet been set aside to implement those plans.

The EPA expects to schedule a meeting sometime in May to update the public on the progress being made at the 52-acre plant site.

Lakeview Area News

Thursday, March 28, 2019

Dental Health Month Contest Winner



Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- Mid-Michigan District Health Department's Oral Health Coordinator, Shelley Treynor, knows what it takes to keep a mouth clean and healthy. She knows that good oral health positively impacts the entire body and leads to a lifelong, beautiful

smile. As part of her job, she shares that knowledge with area school children and invites Montcalm County third, fourth and fifth graders to share what they've learned by entering an essay contest during National Children's Dental Health Month.

The topic of this year's essay was, "Why a healthy mouth is important to me."

This year's winner was Ryan Signs, a fifth-grader from Greenville. In his essay, he explains why caring for your mouth is just as important as caring for the rest of your body. He recently had braces removed and said keeping his mouth healthy is going to remain a priority because he's proud of his new smile!

Ryan received a gift basket valued at \$50.

Pictured in the photo: Shelley Treynor, Mid-Michigan District Health Department Oral Health Coordinator and Ryan Signs.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.

Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes

Clinton County News

Sunday, March 31, 2019

What you need to know about measles

Vaccines and
prevention are key
factors in rise of cases

Carol Thompson Lansing State Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

LANSING – An uptick in measles cases in metro-Detroit highlights a reality public health workers have recognized for a long time: When fewer Americans get vaccinated, preventable diseases are more likely to take hold in our communities.

There are no cases of measles in the Lansing area as of Monday afternoon, but the 18 confirmed cases in Oakland County and outbreaks across the U.S. still should concern area residents, Ingham County Health Officer Linda Vail said.

"We travel, we get on planes, we go places," she said. "It can come from the county next to you or it can come from all the way across the country. You just never know."

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services added 18 places to a list of locations where someone could have been exposed to measles in Oakland County. That list includes medical centers, drug and hardware stores, religious facilities, a car wash, a restaurant and more.

The best way to prevent the disease from taking hold is simple, Vail said: Get vaccinated.

"Vaccines are safe; vaccines are effective; vaccine-preventable diseases can be just like they say, prevented," she said. "When not prevented they can be very, very devastating in the lives of those people who get those diseases."

Measles cases in Michigan

Michigan is one of 15 states that had reported measles cases from Jan. 1 through March 21, 2019, the CDC reported. There were 314 cases in the U.S., mostly involving unvaccinated patients.

It's only March, and confirmed measles cases are approaching the

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Measles

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total for 2018, which was 372 cases.

Measles is still common throughout the world and often is brought to the United States through travel, according to the CDC.

Measles peaked in Michigan last year with 19 cases, the highest since 1994, DHHS spokeswoman Lynn Sutfin said. There were 18 confirmed cases in 2019 as of Monday, all in Oakland County.

Measles symptoms

Measles is a virus that typically spreads through coughing and sneezing. It can live for up to two hours in the air, the CDC states. The virus is very contagious — it has a 90 percent infection rate.

Measles symptoms typically begin with a cough, runny nose, high fever and red, watery eyes, the CDC states. Two to three days later, small white spots may appear inside an infected person's mouth. People often experience a high fever and rash a day or two after that.

People with measles can spread the disease before that tell-tale rash appears.

Who is at risk?

People who have compromised immune systems sometimes can't be vaccinated, said Andrea Tabor, director of Community Health and Education for the Mid-Michigan District Health Department, which includes Clinton County.

Infants under a year old also aren't immunized for measles, mumps or rubella, she said. Those infants are less likely to contract the disease if more people are vaccinated throughout the community.

"The more people are vaccinated, the coverage levels or the (potential to) prevent the spread of the disease is greater," she said.

About the vaccine

The measles vaccine was developed in the 1950s and picked up by public health workers in the 1960s, the CDC states.

The vaccine is about 93 percent effective after one dose and 97 percent effective after the second, according to the CDC. The small number of vaccinated people

who still contract the virus typically have milder symptoms than unvaccinated people.

Advocates of "vaccine choice" are against mandatory vaccine policies. Certain vaccines are mandatory for children attending Michigan schools, although parents can get waivers if they cite religious or philosophical objections and meet with public health department officials.

Vail said we may be too removed from the days when diseases such as measles were widespread to see the importance of vaccination.

"I think that distance from having that lived experience creates a lack of sense of the reality of it, and a sense of urgency around the importance of making sure we do everything we can to prevent these diseases," she said.

Vaccination rates

Mid-Michigan counties are in the bottom half of the state when it comes to vaccination, according to state immunization reports that tally immunization in counties and the city of Detroit. Michigan is also in the bottom half — 29th out of 50 — in the country.

County immunization reports include a tally of what percentage of students get vaccination waivers that allow them to attend school without all necessary vaccinations. Here are the local waiver rates:

- Ingham: 3.2%
- Eaton: 4.6%
- Clinton: 4.7%
- Livingston: 7.9%
- Ionia: 3.6%

How to get vaccinated

The measles vaccine is known as "MMR," an immunization that also includes vaccines for mumps and rubella. It is recommended children get two doses, once when they are 12 to 15 months old, and again when they are between 4 and 6 years old.

It is included in routine vaccinations provided by doctors and public health workers.

Clinton County residents with questions about immunization can call the Mid-Michigan Health Department at 989-224-2195 or visit mmdhd.org to set up

appointments and learn more about vaccines, Tabor said.

Many doctors in the region provide vaccines, and the health department will provide them for free for people on Medicaid or who are uninsured or under-insured. The department will also treat people with insurance and would "never turn anyone away who wanted a vaccination," Tabor said.

Ingham County residents can learn more by calling the Ingham County Health Department at 517-887-4316 or emailing immunize@ingham.org. There is a clinic open daily. Vaccines are often covered by health insurance or administered for between \$0 and \$23 depending on patients' ability to pay.

Eaton County residents can call the Barry-Eaton County Health Department at 517-541-2643 to schedule an appointment. Immunizations are typically done on Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with occasional weekend hours, said Sarah Surna, Community Health Promotions Specialist. Vaccines cost \$23 or are covered by insurance or Medicaid.

Contact Carol Thompson at (517) 377-1018 or ckthompson@lsj.com. Follow her on Twitter @thompsoncarolk.

MMDHD: Get vaccinated against measles



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By Leslie Kinnee

Mid-Michigan District [Health](#) Department

Southeast Michigan is currently experiencing a measles outbreak with 29 cases in Oakland County and one case in Wayne County. Infected individuals range in age from 1 to 63. While there are currently no cases in Clinton, Gratiot or Montcalm Counties, the Mid-Michigan District Health Department is urging residents to make sure they are up-to-date on their vaccinations to help prevent further spread of the disease.

Measles is a highly contagious, vaccine-preventable disease that can have lifelong health complications. Measles is spread by direct person-to-person contact and through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes. The virus can live up to two hours in the air where an infected person was present. It is so contagious that if one person has it, up to 90% of the people close to that person will also get the disease unless they are vaccinated or immune. A person is considered immune if they have had the disease, been vaccinated or born before 1957.

Symptoms of measles usually appear 7 to 14 days after exposure and can include:

High fever

Cough

Runny nose

Red, watery eyes

Tiny white spots on the inner cheeks, gums and roof of the mouth

A red rash that starts on the face and moves down the body

Infected individuals are contagious from four days before the rash appears until four to five days after the rash appears.

Those at highest risk for severe illness and complications from measles include:

Infants and children younger than 5 years

Adults 20 years and over

Pregnant women

Those with compromised immune systems

Vaccination is the best defense against measles. One dose of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is approximately 95% effective at preventing measles and two doses are approximately 97% effective. In those rare instances when a vaccinated individual gets the disease, they will experience much milder symptoms and will be much less likely to spread the disease.

The MMR vaccine requires two doses. The first should be given to children between 12 and 15 months of age with a second dose given between ages 4 and 6 years. Infants 6 to 11 months old are recommended to receive a dose of MMR prior to traveling internationally. The vaccine is effective within 72 hours of exposure to prevent illness. You cannot get measles from the vaccine.

The measles vaccine is available at all three branches of the Mid-Michigan District Health Department. Call the branch nearest you to make an appointment:

Clinton County: 989-224-2195

Gratiot County: 989-875-3681

Montcalm County: 989-831-5237

The vaccine is also available at most pharmacies and your doctor's office.

If you believe you may have been exposed to measles, contact your doctor by phone and limit contact with others until you find out if you are contagious.

Legislators Will Address Failing Septics

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JIM LOWER



RICK OUTMAN

Plan to take up E. coli Issue in Riverdale

**By Rosemary Horvath
Herald Staff Writer**

District 33 State Senator Rick Outman, R-Six Lakes, isn't one to promote "legislation for legislation sake," he claimed when asked about regulating failing septic systems.

Now as chairman of the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality, he sees his opportunity to come up with reasonable and affordable solutions to address the problem.

His first step has been talking with septic installers like himself to consider how they see the problem and remedies.

“They are the boots on the ground,” he described of the fraternity in a recent phone interview.

As owner of a multi-generational excavating business based in Six Lakes, Outman described legislation introduced in 2017 by Rep. Jim Lower, R-Cedar Lake, as falling short of a resolution.

However, if this new legislative session Outman intends to pool resources and work with Rep. Lower in getting both chambers onboard.

Lower chairs the House Local Government Committee.

Meanwhile, Outman also intends to “look for funding to address the E. coli issue in Riverdale,” he said.

Water samples from the Pine River in Seville Township, primarily the Riverdale area, show a high level of E. coli bacteria. Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has determined a source is human and has ordered the township to take action. This indicates some households may not have septic systems at all, while others who do, have failing systems.

Outman noted that the Beal City area in Isabella County and Nevins Lake in Montcalm County, among others, have received state funding for installing municipal systems.

Health Department

According to statistics from the Mid Michigan District Health Department, up to 85 percent of Montcalm County’s Flat River, Gratiot County’s Pine River and Clinton County’s Maple River have exceeded the U.S. Environmental Protect Agency’s E. coli standards for contact with water.

During 2017, the health department considered amending existing Environmental Health Regulations by strengthening the permitting process for septic systems.

During 2017, the health department considered amending existing Environmental Health Regulations by strengthening the permitting process for septic systems.

However, residents in rural areas protested the likelihood of being forced into replacing leaking septic and/or drain fields at their own expense.

The Board of Health eventually allowed the issue to drop while the department investigated other solutions. Last month, Health Officer Marcus Cheatham acknowledged the agency’s current environmental health regulations are not solving the water quality problem.

The agency recommended to the Board of Health creation of a full-time Environmental Health Specialist to coordinate a water quality program. Not only would this position assist with septic system management, but would also seek financial assistance resources for households with failing systems or none at all.

There are an estimated 4,000 households within the Gratiot, Montcalm and Clinton county health department district that cannot afford new systems, Cheatham said.

A specialist would also focus on land applications of septage waste and concentrated animal feeding operations. Cheatham will meet with the three county administrators to review details and, in turn, review the proposal with their respective boards of commissioners. Funding would be included in the annual county allocations for health department services.

“We would not be targeting individuals but targeting areas,” Cheatham told the Board of Health at the March 27 meeting at the health department site in Ithaca.

He told the Herald the environmental health professional would have a bachelor’s degree and certification.

Gratiot County Chairman George Bailey who was elected last month as Board of Health chairman agreed the proposed plan is a good one. “Marcus has laid out a good plan and we need to move forward with this. We owe it to the communities to move forward.”

At the same time, Cheatham and Board of Health Clinton County Commissioner Dwight Washington have been appointed as members of a newly formed workgroup that will review a statewide sanitary code. The Michigan Association for Local Public Health Board of Directors created the workgroup to look at basic principles and the illicit discharge program.

Michigan is the only state in the nation without a statewide sanitary code. This status permits counties to set their own standards and fees.

Health Department Medical Director Gives Report on Wood Burning

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By Jennifer Morse, M.D.

Mid-Michigan District [Health](#) Department

The use of wood stoves as a heating alternative has been increasing over the past several decades, mainly in response to increasing fuel costs. The use of wood and pellets for home heating increased by 34% from 2000 to 2010, while the use of oil and propane declined.

Smoke from burning wood is made up of a complex mixture of gases and fine particles. Fine particles, also called particle pollution, particulate matter (PM), or fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), are the most harmful part of smoke. The number 2.5 refers to particles that are no bigger than 2.5 microns (µm). To get an idea of how small this is, it would take 20 particles that are 2.5 µm to fit across the width of a strand of hair.

There has been extensive research on the effects of fine particulate matter and adverse health effects. Infants, children, elderly, and those with pre-existing heart or lung conditions are typically most severely affected. Some of the effects include:

- irritated eyes, throat, sinuses, and lungs
- headaches
- reduced lung function, especially in children
- lung inflammation or swelling
- increased risk of lower respiratory diseases
- more severe or frequent symptoms from existing lung diseases (such as asthma, emphysema, pneumonia, and bronchitis)
- risk of heart attack and stroke
- chronic lung disease, including bronchitis and emphysema
- chemical and structural changes in lungs
- cancer
- premature death.

Due to the health risks of wood smoke, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been gradually phasing in wood stove standards since 1988. Some states have chosen to enforce more strict standards.

In 1988, Phase I regulations were initiated, in which all stoves manufactured from that point forward could only emit 8.5 grams of particles per hour or less.

In 1990, Phase II began, in which the limit was lowered to 7.5 gm/hr. To encourage use of these newer stoves, the IRS began to offer a tax credit to consumers who purchase EPA-approved models from 2011 to 2016.

Manufacturers continued improving their designs and many stoves had emissions at or below 4.5 gm/hr.

In 2015, Phase III performance standard for residential wood heaters lowered emission limit to 4.5 gm/hr. for all new stoves.

Phase IV is set to go into effect May, 2020 and will lower limits to 2 to 2.5 gm/hr., depending on the measurement method.

Michigan residents do not necessarily have to follow these standards. The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (Excerpt) Act 451 of 1994, 324.5514, Sec. 5514, which was introduced into the Michigan Senate and passed in anticipation to Phase III, states:

(1) The department of environmental quality shall not do any of the following: (a) Promulgate a rule limiting

emissions from wood heaters. (b) Enforce against a manufacturer, distributor, or consumer a federal regulation limiting emissions from wood heaters and adopted after May 1, 2014.

The State of Michigan does not enforce the rules set forth by EPA for wood burners or stoves for residential use. Many communities have enacted local ordinances, primarily pertaining to outdoor wood boilers. Outdoor wood boilers create a lot of smoke that is released low to the ground and have caused a great deal of resident complaints.

NATION BRIEF**Judge: County can't ban unvaxed children from schools, parks**

Ten days after a New York county banned unvaccinated children from public places in an effort to stem the rise of measles cases, a state judge put the injunction on hold.

“Children are hereby permitted to return to their respective schools forthwith and otherwise to assemble in public places,” Judge Rolf Thorsen wrote in his Friday decision.

The controversial ban, announced by a spokesman for Rockland County Executive Ed Day, was an effort to address an outbreak in Rockland County, where 167 confirmed cases of measles had been reported as of Friday. Officials in the county had imposed the ban after declaring a state of emergency for 30 days.

—*The Washington Post*