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Scio Residents for Safe Water

Newsletter

Vol. 2 ~ No. 1 - SEPTEMBER 1996

In Brief

SCIO RESIDENTS FOR SAFE WATER (SRSW) is a nonprofit organization established to inform and educate Scio Township residents on the state of groundwater pollution in Scio Township; to coordinate the efforts of citizens with the Township, county, State and other organizations, and to take whatever actions it deems necessary to protect groundwater quality and prevent negative impacts of groundwater pollution on the Township and its citizens.

Why So Long Between Newsletters?

This has not been an easy newsletter to get out the door. We had every intention of doing a routine newsletter in the spring to review progress on the cleanup promises made by GSI last fall. We chose to hold back when we began to receive conflicting messages regarding GSI's management of the cleanup. We continued to meet with GSI over the summer, and received assurances that these promises would be honored. **We have just received new information that is of critical importance.**

BACKGROUND

In 1995, after years of conflict relating to 1,4-dioxane groundwater contamination, top GSI management recognized that it needed a new approach, as cleanup controversies could have interfered with its expansion plans. Kim Davis, the President and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of GSI was the principal player in negotiating a new cleanup plan with the Township and the MDEQ (Michigan Dept. of Env'tal Quality - formerly the MDNR). The promises made by GSI were a key element in getting local approval for GSI's multi million dollar MEGA grant from the state, and for GSI's local tax abatement for new plant expansion.

Early on in the negotiations, GSI agreed to three guarantees to ass-

ure that the proposed cleanup plan would be implemented:

1. The discharge permit would be changed to specify treatment levels to 3ppb or less before discharge to the Honey Creek tributary.
2. The consent judgment governing the cleanup would be changed to agree with the permit.
3. GSI would enter into a separate agreement with Scio Township that tied tax abatements for GSI to the 3ppb or less treatment levels. (This item is in place.)

On October 23, 1995, at an informational public meeting at the Scio Township Hall, Mr. Davis reviewed the new cleanup plan for the core area of contamination. All the parties who had worked together on this plan were present: GSI representatives, Scio Township citizens, legislators and members of the MDEQ. The centerpiece of GSI's plan is the commitment to pursue groundwater reinjection as the primary disposal method, rather than surface water discharge into Honey Creek, as previously proposed. ReInjection would involve pumping highly contaminated water from several locations on or near the GSI property, treating 1,4-dioxane to less than 77 parts per billion (ppb), and reinjecting the resulting effluent back into the contaminated aquifer. This method would allow reduction of the 1,4-dioxane contamination without putting surface waters and residents' well waters at risk. Extensive monitoring would assure that this "flushing" action would not adversely affect the size or shape of the current 1,4-dioxane plumes.

Mr. Davis also presented GSI's back-up plan for discharge, to be used only in the unlikely event that reinjection fails to work. In that case, surface water discharge to Honey Creek would occur only after purged water from the core is treated to 1,4-dioxane levels of 3 ppb or less. Mr. Davis emphasized that GSI was

confident it could make reinjection work, and that GSI did not anticipate having to go to the creek.

As part of the cleanup plan, GSI has undertaken a comprehensive residential well survey in order to provide better information to assure that the reinjection be protective. These results, along with hydrogeological and other types of data have been loaded into a computer modeling system that will help GSI make the post-treatment reinjection work properly. In addition, tests of water from the core site that had high 1,4-dioxane levels showed that treatment to 0-3 ppb is achievable with current technology.

RECENT NEWS

The plumes continue to spread as expected. Recent sampling done by the County for the State Health Dept. revealed additional "hits" of 1,4-dioxane contamination at the borders of the plume. The County has notified residents of these homes of these results.

On July 23, 1996, GSI announced it would merge with Memtec, Ltd., an Australian filter manufacturer. GSI will operate as a separate entity with Kim Davis remaining as President. Charles Gelman would retire from day-to-day management, but would stay on as chairman of GSI's board of directors. SRSW and township representatives feel positively about the impending merger, and have been assured that Memtec fully supports GSI's commitments presented last October.

General Membership Meetings

****October 21**
November 25**

All SRSW meetings are held on a Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Scio Township Hall located at 827 North Zeeb Road. Mark your calendar and plan on being there.